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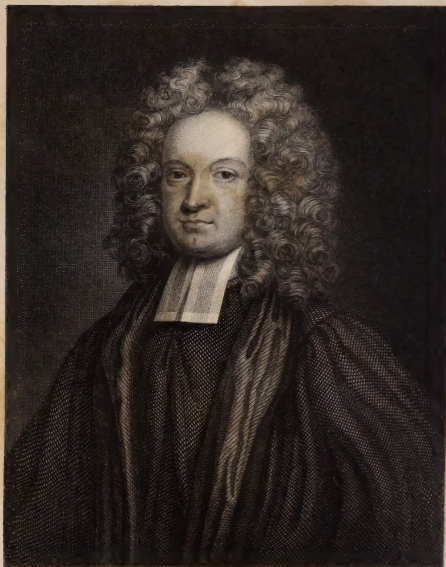
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THE
THEOLOGICAL
WORKS
OF
THE REV. CHARLES LESLIE.





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CHARLES LESLIE, A.M.

THE
THEOLOGICAL
WORKS
OF
THE REV. CHARLES LESLIE.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



OXFORD,
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THE AUTHOR.

CHARLES LESLIE, or Lesley, (for the name is written in both ways in works published by himself,) was the second son of Dr. John Leslie, who was distinguished for his learning and general attainments in the courts of king Charles the First and Second, and was advanced successively to the bishoprics of Orkney, Raphoe, and Clogher^a. His son Charles was born in 1650, and commenced his education at Inniskilling in the county of Fermanagh. He was admitted, in 1664, a fellow-commoner in Trinity college, Dublin, where he continued till he commenced Master of Arts, having had for his tutor Michael Ward, who was afterwards provost, and successively bishop of Ossory and Derry. He then entered himself at the Temple in London, and for some years studied the law: but growing weary of that profession, he relinquished it, and applied himself to divinity. In 1680 he entered into holy orders, and in 1687 became chancellor of the cathedral of Connor, and acted as a justice of the peace; about which time he rendered himself

^a Wood's Athenæ, vol. iv. p. 845.

particularly obnoxious to the papists, by opposing the measures of James the Second for their advancement. The see of Clogher having become vacant in 1687, Patrick Tyrrel, a Roman catholic, was appointed by the king to succeed, and had the episcopal revenues assigned to him. He set up a convent of friars in Monaghan, and fixing his habitation there, held a public visitation of his clergy with great solemnity. Some subtle logicians attended him in this visitation, and he challenged the protestant clergy to a public disputation. Mr. Leslie undertook the task, which he performed to the satisfaction of the protestants; though each party, as is generally the case, claimed the victory. He afterwards held another public disputation with two celebrated popish divines in the church of Tynan, in the diocese of Armagh, before a very numerous assembly of persons of both religions: the issue of which was, that Mr. John Stewart, a popish gentleman, solemnly renounced the errors of the church of Rome. The appointment of a Roman catholic bishop was followed by that of a high sheriff for the county of Monaghan of the same religion. This proceeding alarmed the gentlemen of the county, who depending much on Mr. Leslie's knowledge as a magistrate, went to consult him at his house, where he was then confined by the gout. He told them, that it would be as illegal for them to permit the sheriff to act, as it would be for the sheriff to attempt it: and upon their pressing him to attend in person at the approaching quarter sessions, and pro-

missing to second his measures, he was carried there in great pain and with much difficulty. The pretended sheriff being asked whether he was legally qualified, made answer "that he was of the king's own religion, and it was his majesty's will that he should be sheriff." Mr. Leslie replied, "that they were not inquiring into his majesty's religion, but whether he had qualified himself according to law for acting as a proper officer. That the law was the king's will, and nothing else to be deemed such; that his subjects had no other way of knowing his will, but as it is revealed to them in his laws; and it must always be thought to continue so, until the contrary is notified to them in the same authentic manner." Upon this the bench unanimously agreed to commit the pretended sheriff for his intrusion and arrogant contempt of the court. Mr. Leslie also committed some officers of that tumultuous army which the lord Tyrconnel raised for robbing the country^b. He is even said to have proceeded still farther in avowing his opposition to the ruling party, and to have spoken of James as no longer "defender of the faith," or "head of the church;" and the people were so animated by his speeches, that they attacked the friends of the monarch, and the contest was stained by the blood of the opponents^c.

Notwithstanding the opposition which he thus offered to the papists, Mr. Leslie was a staunch

^b Works of sir J. Ware, by Harris, vol. iii. p. 282.

^c Noble's Continuation of Granger, vol. i. p. 140.

supporter of the exiled family at the revolution in 1688, and refused to take the oaths to king William and queen Mary. He was in consequence deprived of his preferments, and was esteemed the head, or at least a man of the greatest abilities, among the non-jurors. In 1689, when troubles began to arise in Ireland, he withdrew with his family into England, and employed himself in writing political pamphlets to serve the cause which he had embraced. A list of those publications will be given afterwards.

Though Mr. Leslie was thus opposed to the existing government, he continued a zealous supporter of the Church of England as to all her doctrines. His controversy with the Quakers is said to have arisen from his having lodged in the house of a preacher and writer of that persuasion. This person and his wife were converted by Mr. Leslie to the Church of England, and their children, who were already married, were baptized by him: but the parents had been baptized before the rise of Quakerism in England. Mr. Leslie wrote several treatises against the Quakers, all of which are reprinted in the present edition. The first was entitled, *The Snake in the Grass*, and appeared in 1696. It soon came to a second edition; after which an answer was written to it by George Whitehead, entitled, *An Antidote to the Snake in the Grass*: and Leslie, in a second edition of the *Snake*, added a short supplement, in which he noticed this answer. He noticed it again in a work which also appeared

in 1696, which was called, *Satan disrobed from his Disguise of Light*: and he replied still more at length to this, and some other attacks upon his work, in *A Defence of a book entitled, the Snake in the Grass*. Among other answers which the Quakers put out to his book, one which they considered the *opus palmare*, as Leslie styles it, was *A Switch for the Snake*; and this called for a still farther *Reply* from Leslie, in a work which he entitled, *A Second Defence, or the third and last part of the Snake in the Grass*. Some other treatises concerning the Quakers will be found in this edition. This controversy also led him into others: for when he had convinced some of the Quakers of the necessity of the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, he found that they still felt doubts as to the persons who were to administer them, and that many of them were inclined to presbytery. To set them right upon this point, he published the work which stands second in the seventh volume; in which he considers who are qualified to administer the two sacraments, and also defends episcopacy.

Among the works which have caused Mr. Leslie's name to be most celebrated, are those which he wrote against the Deists. The first, which bears the well-known title of *A short and easy Method with the Deists*, was published in 1697, in a letter to a friend. It appears that this friend had been thrown into the company of infidels and scoffers, and asked Mr. Leslie for "some short topic of rea-

“son, without running to authorities and the intricate mazes of learning.” A writer in the *British Critic*^d has asserted, that this person was the first duke of Leeds: but Mr. Leslie himself has informed us, that it was written “for the satisfaction of a gentlewoman, though it is addressed as to a man:” and the history of this person’s doubts, which amounted almost to despair, may be seen in p. 258. of the first volume. It is satisfactory to know that the “Short and easy Method” produced the desired effect: “for she came to reason calmly, and “at last was fully convinced.” Mr. Leslie was then prevailed upon to publish what he had written privately to this friend; and in a second edition he enlarged it very considerably. He also informs us, that he had several conferences with some Deists upon the argument of his book, and that none of them were able to point out the insufficiency of it. No answer was published to it till the year 1710, and then there appeared a scurrilous and blasphemous treatise, entitled, *A Detection of the true meaning and wicked design of a book entitled, A plain and easy Method with the Deists, &c.* Mr. Leslie replied to this attack in the same year, in *The truth of Christianity demonstrated*; to which was prefixed, *A Vindication of the short Method with the Deists.* There is evidence that these works against Deism produced some effect, since a writer of note among the Deists, named Gildon, who had been publisher of *The Oracles of Reason*,

^d *British Critic*, Oct. 1809, p. 425.

professed himself convinced by them, and publicly retracted his errors. He also wrote a book against his former opinions, entitled, *The Deists' Manual, or a rational inquiry into the Christian Religion*^e, &c.

Leslie's *Short Method with the Jews* is written upon the same plan with that which he followed in writing against the Deists. He was led to this work by a conference which he had with an eminent Jew, who confessed that all his objections were answered, and that he intended to own his conviction; but he died soon after, during Mr. Leslie's absence, and to his great regret^f. The work against the Jews is dated Good-Friday, 1689.

Leslie's controversy with the Socinians began in 1694, in which year he wrote a short letter to a friend, comparing the Socinian Trinity with that of the Christians. His friend had expected that the Unitarians would furnish him with an answer to this letter: but not having received any in the course of three years, he applied to Mr. Leslie for a second letter. This was accordingly written in 1697. He then published the first of the six Dialogues, entitled, *The Socinian Controversy Discussed*, which was answered in a short tract, *Remarks on Mr. Charles Leslie's first Dialogue on the Socinian Controversy*. Leslie wrote an Answer to these Remarks, and his opponent again replied in *A Vindi-*

^e Publisher's preface to *the Socinian Controversy Discussed*. See vol. ii. p. 3, of this edition.

^f Works of sir J. Ware, by Harris, vol. iii. p. 282.

cation of his Remarks. Leslie then published *A Reply to the Vindication*, and this ended the first part of the controversy. When the sixth and last Dialogue had appeared, it was followed by *An Examination* of it, and apparently by the same writer, who had remarked on the first Dialogue. Leslie then wrote *An Answer to the Examination*: and before the work was published, he found himself attacked still more violently by John Clendon, who printed, in 1710, *Tractatus Philosophico-theologicus de Persona, or a treatise of the word Person*. This book was condemned by the parliament, and an order was made for the prosecution of the author. Leslie's notice of it was very short, and formed a supplement to his answer to the examination of his last Dialogue.

The principal works published by Mr. Leslie against the papists were, *The true notion of the Catholic Church, in answer to the Bishop of Meaux's Letter to Mr. Nelson*, printed in 1703: *The Case stated between the Church of Rome and the Church of England*, 1713: and *Of Private Judgment and Authority in Matters of Faith*. It is stated by one writer^g, that Mr. Leslie made several converts from popery.

In addition to these works against the Quakers, Deists, Jews, Socinians, and Papists, Mr. Leslie published several treatises upon various subjects: and all those which are in any measure theological will be found in the present edition.

^g Harris.

It will have been observed, that all these works were written subsequently to the revolution in 1688, and Mr. Leslie had occasionally paid visits to the exiled family abroad. These journeys, together with some political treatises which were offensive to the ruling party^h, were the cause of his finally leaving England, and accepting an offer to reside with the Pretender at Bar le Duc. A room was fitted up for him in the Pretender's own house, and he was allowed to read the service of the church of England to the protestants of the familyⁱ. The Pretender is even reported to have given a promise that he would listen to Mr. Leslie's arguments concerning his religion; and the latter endeavoured, though without any effect, to bring about his conversion. According to lord Bolingbroke^k, "Leslie
" was ill used by the chevalier, who was far from
" keeping the word which he had given, and on the
" faith of which Mr. Leslie had come over to him.
" He not only refused to hear him himself, but shel-
" tered the ignorance of his priests, or the badness
" of his cause, or both, behind his authority, and
" absolutely forbid all discourse concerning reli-
" gion." If Leslie felt dissatisfied with the Pretender, it would seem to have been after the year 1714, when he wrote his celebrated letter to a member of parliament in London^l: and when the Pretender withdrew into Italy, after his unsuccessful

^h A warrant was out against him in 1710, for his pamphlet, entitled, *The good old Cause*, &c.

ⁱ Letter to a Member of Parliament.

^k Letter to Sir W. Wyndham.

^l Printed in Boyer's History of Queen Anne.

attempt upon England in 1715, Leslie accompanied him thither. He continued in that country till 1721; but his residence seems to have become extremely unpleasant to him, and he returned to end his days in his native country. He died in his own house at Glaslough, in the county of Monaghan, April 13, 1722.

Though the present edition comprises only the theological works of Leslie, it may not be unacceptable to the reader to have a list of his other publications. They are enumerated by Harris, in his edition of sir James Ware's works, and are as follows:

An Answer to a Book [by Dr. W. King, bishop of Derry,] entitled, *The State of the Protestants of Ireland under the late King James's Government*, 1692.

Gallienus Redivivus, or Murther will out, &c. 1695.

Cassandra, (but I hope not,) telling what will come of it: wherein the new Associations are considered, 1703.

Rehearsals; a paper published at first once a week, and afterwards twice, begun in 1704.

The Bishop of Sarum's [G. Burnet's] proper Defence from a Speech said to be spoken by him against Occasional Conformity, 1704.

The new Association of those called moderate Churchmen with the moderate Whigs and Fanatics, &c. part i. and ii. 1705.

The good old Cause, or Lying in Truth: being a second Defence of the Bishop of Sarum from a second Speech, &c. 1710.

A Letter to the Bishop of Sarum, in answer to a Sermon preached by him a little after the Queen's Death, in Defence of the Revolution, 1715.

Salt for the Leech.

The Anatomy of a Jacobite.

Delenda Carthago.

A Letter to Mr. Molineux, on his Case of Ireland's being bound by the English Acts of Parliament.

A Letter to Julian Johnson.

Several tracts against Dr. Higden and Mr. Hoadley, afterwards Bishop of Winchester.

Two other pieces have also been ascribed to him; The Principles of Dissenters concerning Toleration and Occasional Conformity, 1705: and A Warning for the Church of England, 1706.

His Theological Works were collected and published by himself in 1721, the year preceding his death. They occupy two volumes, folio: and his worthy friend, R. K. whom he thanks for the pains he had taken, in procuring the publication of these works, was Roger Kenyon, a physician and non-juror, who died at St. Germain's. The present edition contains all the treatises which were collected in these two volumes, though not entirely in the same order; and more treatises have been added, whose titles are as follows:

Letter to a Gentleman converted from Deism, vol. i. p. 9.

Letter against Alterations or Additions to the Liturgy of the Church of England, vol. i. p. 505.

Letter about the New Separation, vol. i. p. 509.

The Charge of Socinianism against Dr. Tillotson considered, vol. ii. p. 549.

Reflections upon the Second of Dr. Burnet's Four Discourses, vol. ii. p. 607.

A Supplement, upon occasion of a History of Religion, vol. ii. p. 635.

The Wolf stript of his Shepherd's Clothing, vol. vi. p. 353.

It should be mentioned, that this short sketch of the life of Leslie is principally taken from the *Biographia Britannica*.

To my worthy friend R[oger] K[enyon.]

SIR,

I MAKE this effort, probably the last of using my pen, to thank you for the many proofs I have had of your friendship, especially for the pains you have lately taken to procure the publishing again, in two volumes, my Theological Tracts; and your kindness to me will, I hope, be of service to religion, which will be always assaulted and always maintained; *for the gates of hell will never be able to prevail against it.* And if the arguments urged in those treatises were formerly good, (as surely I believed them to be,) they will be good for ever; if they had then success, they may be still successful against the several enemies of the Christian religion, and of the Church of England. Revealed religion is there defended in the argument against the Deists; and Christian revelation in that against the Jews; the Holy Trinity in another against the Socinians; almost all the articles of the Christian faith in the discourses against the Quakers; in the Conference, the Church of England reformed is vindicated against Popery; and in the Regale, the spiritual powers and commission of Christ, which he left to the apostles and their successors, to be executed by them unto the end of the world, are explained and justified against all the modern innovators, who, pretending to interpret, have laboured utterly to destroy them. If in these writings I have

not prevented all the objections that have been or may be produced against any subject or argument in them, this, I hope, will be no diminution to the usefulness of them; for besides that it is more or less an exception against all writings; the objections made have been mostly cavils unworthy of reply, and those which deserved it are easily cleared by the light of truth, which if fully proved in those books can never be refuted: and you know well that age, infirmity of health, and weariness of flesh, have admonished me, that of writing many books there must be an end. If in writing so much, and on so many subjects, mistakes have crept in, I hope they are not of importance; and such as they are, could I examine and discover, I should readily retract them, and disown nothing but artifice and malice, from which my own conscience acquits me, and God, I hope, who is greater, will not condemn me. I have always thought it my duty to follow truth as closely as I could, without straying after worldly interest; and though the providence of God, infinitely wise and righteous, hath for a great part of my life excluded me from the public exercise of that sacred office to which I was called, yet I have the comfort of having endeavoured in some degree to serve, against its various adversaries, the cause of God, of religion, and of that church in which I was baptized, educated, and received into holy orders. And though the events of life have given me occasions to take a nearer view of the doctrines and worship of other Christian churches, yet from thence I have been confirmed in my belief, that the

Church of England, abuses notwithstanding, is the most agreeable to the institutions of Christ and his apostles. And being now in a point of time to which eternity is near, you will believe me if I declare, (and to the world I would declare it,) that in this communion I resolve to die, and expect to be saved by the merits and mediation of Christ Jesus. And that all our labours may be accepted by his infinite mercy, be serviceable to his religion, and beneficial to our church and country, is the prayer of, &c.

CHARLES LESLIE.

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A
SHORT AND EASY METHOD
WITH
THE DEISTS,

WHEREIN THE
CERTAINTY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS DEMONSTRATED BY INFALLIBLE PROOF
FROM
FOUR RULES,
WHICH ARE INCOMPATIBLE TO ANY IMPOSTURE THAT EVER
YET HAS BEEN, OR THAT CAN POSSIBLY BE.
IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

PRINTED
THEOLOGICAL
PREFACE

TO THE

LETTER AGAINST THE DEISTS.

I HAVE been desired to say something more concerning Apollonius Tyanæus, hereafter mentioned, though it lies upon the Deists to produce him, if they dare pitch upon him as an instance, to which they are fairly invited; but herein only shew their modesty: they are bashful in the face of an argument; but where a jest, a grin, or a laugh will carry it off, they are unmerciful, and triumph clamorously. They have brought upon the stage no competitor with our blessed Saviour, equal to their Apollonius: therefore I named him, and provoked them (but I cannot) to bring it to a trial. For the sake therefore of some readers, who may not know the story, I will here give this short account of him.

First then, let it be observed, that what account we have of Apollonius Tyanæus, is from Philostratus, who lived an hundred years after the time in which this Apollonius is said to have flourished.

Whence had Philostratus this? He says, from the book of one Damis, who had been a companion of Apollonius's. How came Philostratus by this book? He says, that "an acquaintance of Damis's brought the empress Julia to the knowledge of his Commentaries, which till then had not been published." (I give it you in the words of Mr. Blount's translation.) And that "the empress commanded Philostratus to transcribe those Commentaries, and bestow some pains on the relations contained in them." What pains was this? Only to transcribe? No, that was small pains, and not fit to be imposed upon so great an ora-

tor as Philostratus; it was the office of a clerk. But it seems this book of Damis's was so poorly wrote, as not fit to be exposed to view, at least of the empress, "who," as Philostratus tells us, "was much addicted to the study of" "rhetoric. For," says he, "Damis had given a plain but "unelegant description of them," i. e. of the acts of Apollonius. Therefore the pains that Philostratus took, he tells us, was upon the relations of Apollonius, that were in the Commentaries of Damis; and to fit them for the ear of an empress, who loved rhetoric, *alias* romancing and fine stories. So that we are not sure we have one word of the Commentaries of Damis. But this we are sure of, that we have them only as they were new dressed, and vamp't by an orator, to please the fancy of a rhetorical lady.

But, which is more, Philostratus does not pretend that he confined himself to the Commentaries of Damis. For he tells us, (*ibid.* l. I. c. 3.) that "in composing these books of "his, he had gathered together the dispersed relations of "Apollonius into one volume:" and names another author, one Mœragenes, who had wrote four books concerning Apollonius. But he says, that there "is no credit to be "given to them." Why? "Because," says he, "Mœragenes, in his books, seemeth to be altogether ignorant of "his (Apollonius's) actions." It seems they were not so romantic as the Commentaries of Damis, and so less fit for an entertainment to the empress. But they do not seem to be the less true for that: and Philostratus gives no other reason against them, i. e. they were not for his purpose, which was, to compose something new and surprising, to gratify the empress.

Let me observe here, that this was an age wherein the Melesiaca, or feigned romantic stories, were much in vogue: such as Heliodorus's *Æthiopics*, the *Amours of Clitophon and Leucippe*, &c. And it is very probable that Philostratus living, as he tells us, at court, would endeavour not to be out of the fashion.

And indeed if he had been to compose a romance to have appeared like any thing of truth, he could not have introduced it upon less authority, and a more precarious foundation, than this which he has given for his hero, Apollonius.

So extremely slight, that some very learned men have, not without reason, doubted whether ever there was such a man as this Apollonius.

It is true that Origen (*contr. Cels.*) does mention him ; but so he did likewise the recognition of St. Clement, (tom. III. *Comment. in Genes. in Philocal.* c. 23.) which now are taken for granted to have been wrote only in his name. And it is no strange thing that some wise and learned men may be imposed upon in matters of this nature.

But neither wise nor foolish, that have eyes in their head, can be imposed upon in the four marks hereafter given, p. 12. whereby to ascertain the truth of any matter of fact. And the Deists not daring to bring the matter of fact of Apollonius to the test of these rules, all that they can possibly infer from their legends is, that perhaps they may be true : whereas they must acknowledge, unless they will deny the certainty of all their senses, that the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ are certainly, undubitably, and infallibly true.

And there is almost the same certainty that those of Apollonius must be false : because, as men cannot be imposed upon in such notorious matters of fact, it is next to the same impossibility that they should forget them ; at least so soon as were these which were told of Apollonius. For example, his freeing the city of Ephesus from the plague ; his vanishing out of the presence of Domitian and his court, when he was arraigned before him ; and his familiar converse with many other kings, and wonders done before them ; and the mighty estimation, even to adoration, which he is thereby said to have obtained all over the world.

Now is it possible that all this could be so totally forgot, as that no mention at all should be made of it for a hundred years after these things were said to be done? Inso-much that Philostratus complains, in the introduction to his legend, (l. I. c. 1.) that whereas Pythagoras, and other ancient philosophers, who had lived many ages before, were still remembered with great veneration, yet that Apollonius, who, as he says, “came nearer to divine wisdom than Pythagoras himself, is not yet known among men—though “he lived neither very long ago, nor yet very lately.”

Was it possible that the death of so famous a person should not have been greatly noticed, and his sepulchre honoured and visited? Yet Philostratus tells, that there was no certainty of the place where he died; that some said it was at Ephesus, some at Rhodes, and some at Crete; and that his sepulchre could nowhere be found. To help this, some bestowed an apotheosis upon him, and would have it that he was taken up into heaven. But did any body see it? No; that is not so much as alleged: nor could Philostratus believe it, who said that he had travelled far and near to find out his sepulchre, but could not hear of it.

And if he was so universally famous as Philostratus has represented him, could Mœragenes have wrote his life, and be “altogether ignorant of his actions,” as Philostratus has accused him? Mœragenes wrote before Philostratus, and therefore had better reason to know. And if Philostratus had transmitted to us the commentaries of Mœragenes, as well as what helps he took out of those of Damis, or fathered upon him, we should no doubt have had a more moderate account of Apollonius; since Philostratus does confess, that for that only reason he had rejected the books of Mœragenes. And if they were in being when he wrote, he was under a necessity of saying something against them, (though what he has said confirms them the more,) because they gave the lie so notoriously to his new romance of Apollonius.

But now, to sum up all, let us suppose to the utmost, that all this said romance were true, what would this amount to? Only that Apollonius did such things. What then? What if he were so virtuous a person, as that God should have given him the power to work several miracles? This would no ways hurt the argument that is here brought againse the Deists; because Apollonius set up no new religion, nor did he pretend that he was sent with any revelation from heaven, to introduce any new sort of the worship of God. So that it is of no consequence to the world, whether these were true or pretended miracles; whether Apollonius was an honest man or a magician; or whether ever there was such a man or not. For he left no law or gospel behind him, to be received upon the credit of those miracles which he is said to have wrought; and therefore if he did work such, it is no prejudice to the truth, either of the law or the gospel. So that this whole parallel betwixt Apollonius and Christ is altogether impertinent, and shews at once the impotence as well as malice of those who propose it.

II. This brings me from Apollonius to his new editor amongst us, Charles Blount: for I find myself obliged to account for what I have said of him. I have been told (since the first edition of this) that it has disoblged some friends, (far from my intention,) who for relation or acquaintance had a regard to the person of Mr. Blount, though not to his principles; and think that I have used him too coarsely, he being a gentleman.

But when it is considered how he has treated our blessed Lord and Saviour, like the soldiers who bowed the knee to him, and spit in his face; who cried, *Hail, King of the Jews!* to mock him the more outrageously: that not only in his comments upon this history of Apollonius, but in his *Great Diana*, his *Oracles of Reason*, and in all his works, he set himself, with his whole might, to oppose and ridicule the birth, passion, resurrection, ascension, and all that is said of our Christ and God in the holy gospel, and

all revealed religion; of which I could give instances out of number, but they are not fit to be heard by Christian ears; and it would gratify the Deists but to have them named.

Again, considering that his most pernicious books (many of which were well-nigh lost) are of late carefully collected and reprinted, (to the scandal of a Christian country,) and dispersed, to poison the nation; I say, all this being duly considered, I have no apology to make for calling this man *execrable*, nor can I retract or compound it; seeing it is come to this, that either his blasphemous works, (who set himself at the head of the Deists, and after whom they now copy,) or else the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ must remain execrable.

Nor would I give better quarter to the greatest king upon earth, who should do the same: but, after the example of our holy apostle, I would say, I do say, let him, or an angel from heaven, who durst thus presume, be accursed.

If Mr. Blount had meddled only with the argument, and opposed what he could, in that method, I would have thought him worthy of civil treatment; as I will any other of the Deists, who shall answer the reasons I have here set down. And if he can overthrow them, and give me better on his side, I confess I shall then be tempted to turn infidel with him. And to this I invite them, I provoke them. But if they will not, (as there is little appearance that they will,) then let them never more value themselves as men of sense, at least let none others do so, while they refuse to be determined by reason.

But if instead of reason, they have recourse, like Mr. Blount, to their old topic of buffoonery, and shew their parts in witty satire and scorn, and laugh out—priestcraft—for an hour together; let them enjoy the fruit of their labours, and what they justly deserve, to be the admiration of fools, and contempt of all wise and good men. And so I leave them.

A

SHORT AND EASY METHOD

WITH

THE DEISTS.

SIR,

I. **I**N answer to yours of the third instant, I much condole with you your unhappy circumstances, of being placed among such company, where, as you say, you continually hear the sacred scriptures, and the histories therein contained, particularly of Moses and of Christ, and all revealed religion turned into ridicule, by men who set up for sense and reason. And they say that there is no greater ground to believe in Christ than in Mahomet; that all these pretences to revelation are cheats, and ever have been among Pagans, Jews, Mahometans, and Christians; that they are all alike impositions of cunning and designing men, upon the credulity, at first, of simple and unthinking people, till, their numbers increasing, their delusions grew popular, came at last to be established by laws; and then the force of education and custom gives a bias to the judgments of after-ages, till such deceits come really to be believed, being received upon trust from the ages foregoing, without examining into the original and bottom of them: which these our modern men of sense (as they desire to be esteemed) say, that they only do, that they only have their judgments freed

from the slavish authority of precedents and laws, in matters of truth, which, they say, ought only to be decided by reason; though by a prudent compliance with popularity and laws, they preserve themselves from outrage and legal penalties; for none of their complexion are addicted to sufferings and martyrdom.

Now, sir, that which you desire from me is, some short topic of reason, if such can be found, whereby, without running to authorities, and the intricate mazes of learning, which breed long disputes, and which these men of reason deny by wholesale, though they can give no reason for it; only suppose that authors have been trumped upon us, interpolated, and corrupted, so that no stress can be laid upon them, though it cannot be shewn wherein they are so corrupted; which, in reason, ought to lie upon them to prove who allege it; otherwise it is not only a precarious, but a guilty plea: and the more, that they refrain not to quote books on their side, for whose authority there are no better, or not so good grounds. However, you say it makes your disputes endless, and they go away with noise and clamour, and a boast that there is nothing, at least nothing certain, to be said on the Christian side. Therefore you are desirous to find some one topic of reason, which should demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion, and at the same time distinguish it from the impostures of Mahomet and the whole Pagan world: that our Deists may be brought to this test, and be either obliged to renounce their reason, and the common reason of mankind, or to submit to the clear proof, from reason, of the Christian religion; which must be such a proof as no

imposture can pretend to, otherwise it cannot prove the Christian religion not to be an imposture. And, whether such a proof, one single proof, (to avoid confusion,) is not to be found out, you desire to know from me.

And you say, that you cannot imagine but there must be such a proof, because every truth is in itself clear, and one; and therefore that one reason for it, if it be the true reason, must be sufficient; and if sufficient, it is better than many; for multiplicity confounds, especially to weak judgments.

Sir, you have imposed an hard task upon me, I wish I could perform it. For though every truth is one, yet our sight is so feeble, that we cannot always come to it directly, but by many inferences, and laying of things together.

But I think that in the case before us there is such a proof as you require, and I will set it down as short and plain as I can.

II. First, then, I suppose that the truth of the doctrine of Christ will be sufficiently evinced, if the matters of fact which are recorded of him in the gospels be true; for his miracles, if true, do vouch the truth of what he delivered.

The same is to be said as to Moses. If he brought the children of Israel through the Red sea, in that miraculous manner which is related in Exodus, and did such other wonderful things as are there told of him, it must necessarily follow that he was sent from God; these being the strongest proofs we can desire, and which every Deist will confess he would acquiesce in, if he saw them with his eyes. Therefore the stress of this cause will depend upon the proof of these matters of fact.

1. And the method I will take is, first, to lay down such rules, as to the truth of matters of fact in general, that where they all meet, such matters of fact cannot be false. And then, secondly, to shew that all these rules do meet in the matters of fact of Moses, and of Christ; and that they do not meet in the matters of fact of Mahomet, of the heathen deities, or can possibly meet in any imposture whatsoever.

2. The rules are these: 1. That the matters of fact be such, as that men's outward senses, their eyes and ears, may be judges of it. 2. That it be done publicly, in the face of the world. 3. That not only public monuments be kept up in memory of it, but some outward actions to be performed. 4. That such monuments and such actions or observances be instituted, and do commence from the time that the matter of fact was done.

3. The two first rules make it impossible for any such matter of fact to be imposed upon men, at the time when such matter of fact was said to be done, because every man's eyes and senses would contradict it. For example, suppose any man should pretend that yesterday he divided the Thames, in presence of all the people of London, and carried the whole city, men, women, and children, over to Southwark on dry land, the waters standing like walls on both sides: I say, it is morally impossible that he could persuade the people of London that this was true, when every man, woman, and child could contradict him, and say, that this was a notorious falsehood, for that they had not seen the Thames so divided, or had gone over on dry land. Therefore I take it for granted (and, I suppose, with the

allowance of all the Deists in the world) that no such imposition could be put upon men at the time when such public matter of fact was said to be done.

4. Therefore it only remains that such matter of fact might be invented some time after, when the men of that generation, wherein the thing was said to be done, are all past and gone; and the credulity of after-ages might be imposed upon, to believe that things were done in former ages which were not.

And for this, the two last rules secure us as much as the two first rules, in the former case; for whenever such a matter of fact came to be invented, if not only monuments were said to remain of it, but likewise that public actions and observances were constantly used ever since the matter of fact was said to be done, the deceit must be detected by no such monuments appearing, and by the experience of every man, woman, and child, who must know that no such actions or observances were ever used by them. For example, suppose I should now invent a story of such a thing done a thousand years ago, I might perhaps get some to believe it; but if I say, that not only such a thing was done, but that from that day to this every man, at the age of twelve years, had a joint of his little finger cut off; and that every man in the nation did want a joint of such a finger; and that this institution was said to be part of the matter of fact done so many years ago, and vouched as a proof and confirmation of it, and as having descended, without interruption, and been constantly practised in memory of such matter of fact all along, from the time that such matter of fact was done: I say, it is impossible I should be

believed in such a case, because every one could contradict me, as to the mark of cutting off a joint of the finger; and that being part of my original matter of fact, must demonstrate the whole to be false.

III. Let us now come to the second point, to shew that the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ have all these rules or marks before mentioned; and that neither the matters of fact of Mahomet, or what is reported of the heathen deities, have the like; and that no impostor can have them all.

1. As to Moses, I suppose it will be allowed me that he could not have persuaded 600,000 men, that he had brought them out of Egypt through the Red sea; fed them forty years, without bread, by miraculous manna, and the other matters of fact recorded in his books, if they had not been true: because every man's senses that were then alive must have contradicted it. And therefore he must have imposed upon all their senses, if he could have made them believe it, when it was false, and no such things done. So that here are the first and second of the above-mentioned four marks.

For the same reason it was equally impossible for him to have made them receive his five books as truth, and not to have rejected them as a manifest imposture; which told of all these things as done before their eyes, if they had not been so done. See how positively he speaks to them, Deut. xi. 2. to ver. 8. *And know you this day: for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched out arm, and his miracles, and his acts,*

which he did in the midst of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land; and what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day; and what he did unto you in the wilderness, until he came into this place; and what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel: but your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which he did, &c.

From hence we must suppose it impossible that these books of Moses (if an imposture) could have been invented and put upon the people who were then alive, when all these things were said to be done.

The utmost therefore that even a *suppose* can stretch to is, that these books were wrote in some age after Moses, and put out in his name.

And to this I say, that if it was so, it was impossible that those books should have been received, as the books of Moses, in that age wherein they may have been supposed to have been first invented. Why? Because they speak of themselves as delivered by Moses, and kept in the ark from his time: *And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded the Levites, who bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God,*

that it may be there for a witness against thee, Deut. xxxi. 24, 25, 26. And there was a copy of this book to be left likewise with the king: And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them, Deut. xvii. 18, 19.

Here you see that this book of the law speaks of itself, not only as an history or relation of what things were then done, but as the standing and municipal law and statutes of the nation of the Jews, binding the king as well as the people.

Now, in whatever age after Moses you will suppose this book to have been forged, it was impossible it could be received as truth; because it was not then to be found, either in the ark, or with the king, or any where else: for when first invented, every body must know that they had never heard of it before.

And therefore they could less believe it to be the book of their statutes, and the standing law of the land, which they had all along received, and by which they had been governed.

Could any man, now at this day, invent a book of statutes or acts of parliament for England, and make it pass upon the nation as the only book of statutes that ever they had known? As impossible was it for the books of Moses (if they were invented in any age after Moses) to have been received for what they declare themselves to be, viz. the statutes

and municipal law of the nation of the Jews: and to have persuaded the Jews, that they had owned and acknowledged these books, all along from the days of Moses, to that day in which they were first invented, that is, that they had owned them before they had ever so much as heard of them. Nay, more, the whole nation must in an instant forget their former laws and government, if they could receive these books as being their former laws. And they could not otherwise receive them, because they vouched themselves so to be. Let me ask the Deists but this one short question; Was there ever a book of sham-laws, which were not the laws of the nation, palmed upon any people since the world began? If not, with what face can they say this of the book of laws of the Jews? Why will they say that of them, which they confess impossible in any nation, or among any people?

But they must be yet more unreasonable. For the books of Moses have a further demonstration of their truth, than even other law books have: for they not only contain the laws, but give an historical account of their institution, and the practice of them from that time: as of the passover in memory of the death of the firstborn in Egypt: and that the same day all the *firstborn of Israel, both of man and beast*, were, by a perpetual law, dedicated to God: and the *Levites taken for all the firstborn of the children of Israel*: that Aaron's rod which budded, was kept in the ark, in memory of the rebellion and wonderful destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and for the confirmation of the priesthood to the tribe of Levi. As likewise the pot of manna, in memory of their having been fed with it

Numb. viii.
17, 18.

forty years in the wilderness. That the brasen serpent was kept (which remained to the days of Hezekiah, 2 Kings xviii. 4.) in memory of that wonderful deliverance, by only looking upon it, from the biting of the fiery serpents, the feast of Pentecost, in memory of the dreadful appearance of God upon mount Horeb, &c.

Numb. xxi.
9.

And besides these remembrances of particular actions and occurrences, there were other solemn institutions in memory of their deliverance out of Egypt, in the general, which included all the particulars. As of the sabbath, their daily sacrifices and yearly expiation; their new moons, and several feasts and fasts. So that there were yearly, monthly, weekly, daily remembrances and recognitions of these things.

Deut. v. 15.

And not only so, but the books of the same Moses tell us, that a particular tribe (of Levi) was appointed and consecrated by God, as his priests; by whose hands, and none other, the sacrifices of the people were to be offered, and these solemn institutions to be celebrated. That it was death for any other to approach the altar. That their high-priest wore a glorious mitre, and magnificent robes of God's own contrivance, with the miraculous Urim and Thummim in his breastplate, whence the divine responses were given. That, at his word, the king and all the people were to go out, and to come in. That these Levites were likewise the chief judges, even in all civil causes, and that it was death to resist their sentence. Now whenever it can be supposed that these books of Moses were forged, in some ages after Moses, it is impossible they could have been received as true, unless the forgers could

Numb.
xxvii. 21.
Deut. xvii.
8—13.
1 Chron.
xxiii. 4.

have made the whole nation believe, that they had received these books from their fathers, had been instructed in them when they were children, and had taught them to their children; moreover, that they had all been circumcised, and did circumcise their children, in pursuance to what was commanded in these books; that they had observed the yearly passover, the weekly sabbath, the new moons, and all these several feasts, fasts, and ceremonies, commanded in these books: that they had never eaten any swine's flesh, or other meats prohibited in these books: that they had a magnificent tabernacle, with a visible priesthood to administer in it, which was confined to the tribe of Levi; over whom was placed a glorious high-priest, cloathed with great and mighty prerogatives; whose death only could deliver those that were fled to the cities of refuge. And that these priests were their ordinary judges, Numb. xxxv. 25. 28. even in civil matters: I say, was it possible to have persuaded a whole nation of men, that they had known and practised all these things, if they had not done it? Or, secondly, to have received a book for truth, which said they had practised them, and appeal to that practice? So that here are the third and fourth of the marks above mentioned.

But now let us descend to the utmost degree of supposition, viz. that these things were practised before these books of Moses were forged; and that these books did only impose upon the nation, in making them believe, that they had kept these observances in memory of such and such things, as were inserted in these books.

Well then, let us proceed upon this supposition, (however groundless;) and now, will not the same

impossibilities occur, as in the former case? For, first, this must suppose that the Jews kept all these observances in memory of nothing, or without knowing any thing of their original, or the reason why they kept them. Whereas these very observances did express the ground and reason of their being kept, as the passover, in memory of God's passing over the children of the Israelites, in that night wherein he slew all the firstborn of Egypt, and so of the rest.

But, secondly, let us suppose, contrary both to reason and matter of fact, that the Jews did not know any reason at all, why they kept these observances; yet was it possible to put it upon them, that they had kept these observances in memory of what they had never heard of before that day, whensoever you will suppose that these books of Moses were first forged? For example; suppose I should now forge some romantic story, of strange things done a thousand years ago, and in confirmation of this should endeavour to persuade the Christian world, that they had all along, from that day to this, kept the first day of the week, in memory of such an hero, an Apollonius, a Barcosbas, or a Mahomet; and had all been baptized in his name; and sworn by his name, and upon that very book, (which I had then forged, and which they never saw before,) in their public judicatures; that this book was their gospel and law, which they had ever since that time, these thousand years past, universally received and owned, and none other: I would ask any Deist, whether he thinks it possible, that such a cheat could pass, or such a legend be received as the gospel of Christians; and that they

could be made believe that they never had had any other gospel? The same reason is as to the books of Moses ; and must be, as to every matter of fact, which has all the four marks before mentioned ; and these marks secure any such matter of fact as much from being invented and imposed in any after-ages, as at the time when such matters of fact were said to be done.

Let me give one very familiar example more in this case. There is the Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain ; every body knows it, and yet none knows the reason why those great stones were set there, or by whom, or in memory of what.

Now suppose I should write a book to-morrow, and tell there, that these stones were set up by Hercules, Polyphemus, or Garagantua, in memory of such and such of their actions ; and, for a further confirmation of this, should say, in this book, that it was wrote at the time when such actions were done, and by the very actors themselves, or eyewitnesses. And that this book had been received as truth, and quoted by authors of the greatest reputation in all ages since. Moreover, that this book was well known in England, and enjoined by act of parliament to be taught our children, and that we did teach it our children, and had been taught it ourselves when we were children. I ask any Deist, whether he thinks this could pass upon England? And whether, if I, or any other, should insist upon it, we should not, instead of being believed, be sent to Bedlam ?

Now let us compare this with the Stonehenge, as I may call it, or twelve great stones set up at Gilgal, which is told in the fourth chapter of Joshua. There it is said, ver. 6. that the reason why they

were set up, was, that when their children, in after-ages, should ask the meaning of them, it should be told them.

And the thing, in memory of which they were set up, was such as could not possibly be imposed upon that nation, at that time, when it was said to be done; it was as wonderful and miraculous as their passage through the Red sea.

And this instance is free from a very poor objection which the Deists have advanced against that miracle of the Red sea: thinking to salve it by a spring tide, with the concurrence of a strong wind, happening at the same time; which left the sand so dry, as that the Israelites, being all foot, might pass through the ousey places and holes, which it must be supposed the sea left behind it: but that the Egyptians, being all horse and chariots, stuck in those holes, and were entangled, so as that they could not march so fast as the Israelites; and that this was all the meaning of its being said, that God took off their (the Egyptians) chariot wheels, that they drove them heavily. So that they would make nothing extraordinary, at least not miraculous, in all this action.

This is advanced in Le Clerc's Dissertations upon Genesis, lately printed in Holland, and that part with others of the like tendency, endeavouring to resolve other miracles, as that of Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. into mere natural causes, are put into English by the well-known T. Brown, for the edification of the Deists in England.

But these gentlemen have forgot, that the Israelites had great herds of many thousand cattle with them; which would be apter to stray and fall into

those holes and ousey places in the sand, than horses with riders, who might direct them.

But such precarious and silly supposes are not worth the answering. If there had been no more in this passage through the Red sea than that of a spring tide, &c. it had been impossible for Moses to have made the Israelites believe that relation given of it in Exodus, with so many particulars, which themselves saw to be true.

And all those scriptures which magnify this action, and appeal to it as a full demonstration of the miraculous power of God, must be reputed as romance or legend.

I say this for the sake of some Christians, who think it no prejudice to the truth of the holy Bible, but rather an advantage, as rendering it more easy to be believed, if they can solve whatever seems miraculous in it by the power of second causes; and so to make all, as they speak, natural and easy: wherein, if they could prevail, the natural and easy result would be, not to believe one word in all those sacred oracles. For if things be not as they are told in any relation, that relation must be false. And if false in part, we cannot trust to it, either in whole or in part.

Here are to be excepted mistranslations and errors either in copy or in press; but where there is no room for supposing of these, as where all copies do agree, there we must either receive all or reject all. I mean in any book that pretends to be written from the mouth of God; for in other common histories, we may believe part, and reject part, as we see cause.

But to return. The passage of the Israelites over

Jordan, in memory of which those stones at Gilgal were set up, is free from all those little carpings before mentioned that are made as to the passage through the Red sea. For notice was given to the Israelites the day before, of this great miracle to be done. It was done at noonday, before the whole nation. And when the waters of Jordan were divided, it was not at any low ebb, but at the time when that river *overflowed all his banks*: and it was done, not by winds, or in length of time, which winds must take to do it, but all on a sudden, as soon as the *feet of the priests that bear the ark were dipped in the brim of the water*, then the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. The priests stood in the midst of Jordan till all the armies of Israel had passed over. *And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before. And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel*

Josh. iii. 5.

ver. 15.

Josh. iv.
from ver.
18, &c.

came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.

If the passage over the Red sea had been only taking advantage of a spring tide, or the like, how would this teach *all the people of the earth, that the hand of the Lord was mighty?* How would a thing no more remarkable have been taken notice of through all the world? How would it have taught Israel to *fear the Lord*, when they must know, that, notwithstanding all these big words, there was so little in it? How could they have believed, or received a book, as truth, which they knew told the matter so far otherwise from what it was?

But, as I said, this passage over Jordan, which is here compared to that of the Red sea, is free from all those cavils that are made, as to that of the Red sea, and is a further attestation to it, being said to be done in the same manner as was that of the Red sea.

Now, to form our argument, let us suppose that there never was any such thing as that passage over Jordan: that these stones at Gilgal were set up, upon some other occasion, in some after-age: and then, that some designing man invented this book of Joshua, and said, that it was wrote by Joshua at that time; and gave this stonage at Gilgal for a testimony of the truth of it. Would not every body say to him, We know the stonage at Gilgal, but we

never heard before of this reason for it ; nor of this book of Joshua ? Where has it been all this while ? And where, and how came you, after so many ages, to find it ? Besides, this book tells us, that this passage over Jordan was ordained to be taught our children, from age to age ; and therefore, that they were always to be instructed in the meaning of that stonage at Gilgal as a memorial of it. But we were never taught it, when we were children, nor did ever teach our children any such thing. And it is not likely that could have been forgotten, while so remarkable a stonage did continue, which was set up for that, and no other end.

And if, for the reasons before given, no such imposition could be put upon us, as to the stonage in Salisbury Plain, how much less could it be as to the stonage at Gilgal ?

And if, where we know not the reason of a bare naked monument, such a sham reason cannot be imposed ; how much more is it impossible to impose upon us in actions and observances, which we celebrate in memory of particular passages ! How impossible to make us forget those passages which we daily commemorate ; and persuade us, that we had always kept such institutions in memory of what we never heard of before ; that is, that we knew it, before we knew it !

And if we find it thus impossible for an imposition to be put upon us, even in some things, which have not all the four marks before mentioned ; how much more impossible is it, that any deceit should be in that thing, where all the four marks do meet !

This has been shewed in the first place, as to the matters of fact of Moses.

2. Therefore, I come now, secondly, to shew, that, as in the matters of fact of Moses, so likewise, all these four marks do meet in the matters of fact, which are recorded in the gospel of our blessed Saviour. And my work herein will be the shorter, because all that is said before, of Moses and his books, is every way as applicable to Christ and his gospel. His works and miracles are there said to be done publicly, in the face of the world, as he argued to his accusers, *I spake openly to the world,* John xviii. 20. *and in secret have I said nothing.* It is told that Acts ii. 41. iv. 4. three thousand at one time, and that above five thousand at another, were converted, upon conviction of what themselves had seen, what had been done publicly before their eyes, wherein it was impossible to have imposed upon them. Therefore here were the two first of the rules before mentioned.

Then for the two second: Baptism, and the Lord's supper, were instituted as perpetual memorials of these things; and they were not instituted in after-ages, but at the very time, when these things were said to be done; and have been observed without interruption, in all ages through the whole Christian world, down all the way, from that time to this. And Christ himself did ordain apostles, and other ministers, of his gospel, to preach and administer these sacraments, and to govern his church: and that *always even unto the end of the world:* Mat. xxviii. 20. accordingly they have continued by regular succession to this day; and, no doubt, ever shall while the earth shall last. So that the Christian clergy are as notorious a matter of fact, as the tribe of Levi among the Jews. And the gospel is as much a law to the

Christians, as the books of Moses to the Jews : and it being part of the matters of fact related in the gospel, that such an order of men were appointed by Christ, and to continue to the end of the world ; consequently, if the gospel was a fiction, and invented (as it must be) in some age after Christ, then, at that time, when it was first invented, there could be no such order of clergy, as derived themselves from the institution of Christ; which must give the lie to the gospel, and demonstrate the whole to be false. And the matters of fact of Christ being pressed to be true, no otherwise than as there was, at that time, (whenever the Deists will suppose the gospel to be forged,) not only public sacraments of Christ's institution, but an order of clergy, likewise of his appointment, to administer them ; and it being impossible there could be any such things before they were invented, it is as impossible that they should be received when invented : and therefore, by what was said above, it was as impossible to have imposed upon mankind in this matter, by inventing of it in after-ages, as at the time when those things were said to be done.

3. The matters of fact of Mahomet, or what is fabled of the deities, do all want some of the aforesaid four rules, whereby the certainty of matters of fact is demonstrated. First for Mahomet, he pretended to no miracles, as he tells us in his Alcoran, c. 6, &c. and those which are commonly told of him pass among the Mahometans themselves but as legendary fables ; and as such, are rejected by the wise and learned among them ; as the legends of their saints are in the church of Rome. See Dr. Prideaux's *Life of Mahomet*, p. 34.

But, in the next place, those which are told of him do all want the two first rules before mentioned. For his pretended converse with the moon, his Mersa, or night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to heaven, &c. were not performed before any body: we have only his own word for them: and they are as groundless as the delusions of Fox or Muggleton among ourselves. The same is to be said (in the second place) of the fables of the heathen gods, of Mercury's stealing sheep, Jupiter's turning himself into a bull, and the like; besides the folly and unworthiness of such senseless pretended miracles. And moreover, the wise among the heathen did reckon no otherwise of these, but as fables, which had a mythology, or mystical meaning in them, of which several of them have given us the rationale, or explication. And it is plain enough that Ovid meant no other by all his *Metamorphoses*.

It is true, the heathen deities had their priests: they had likewise feasts, games, and other public institutions, in memory of them. But all these want the fourth mark, viz. that such priesthood and institutions should commence from the time that such things as they commemorate were said to be done; otherwise they cannot secure after-ages from the imposture, by detecting it at the time when first invented, as hath been argued before. But the Bacchanalia, and other heathen feasts, were instituted many ages after what was reported of these gods was said to be done, and therefore can be no proof of them. And the priests of Bacchus, Apollo, &c. were not ordained by these supposed gods: but were appointed by others, in after-ages, only in honour to them. And therefore these orders of priests are no

evidence to the truth of the matters of fact, which are reported of their gods.

IV. Now to apply what has been said, you may challenge all the Deists in the world to shew any action that is fabulous, which has all the four rules, or marks, before mentioned. No, it is impossible. And (to resume a little what is spoken to before) the histories of Exodus, and the gospel, could never have been received, if they had not been true; because the institution of the priesthood of Levi and of Christ; of the sabbath, the passover, of circumcision, of baptism, and the Lord's supper, &c. are there related, as descending all the way down from those times, without interruption. And it is full as impossible to persuade men, that they had been circumcised, baptized, had circumcised or baptized their children, celebrated passovers, sabbaths, sacraments, &c. under the government and administration of a certain order of priests, if they had done none of these things, as to make them believe that they had gone through seas upon dry land, seen the dead raised, &c. And without believing of these, it was impossible that either the law or the gospel could have been received.

And the truth of the matters of fact of Exodus and the gospel, being no otherwise pressed upon men, than as they have practised such public institutions; it is appealing to the senses of mankind for the truth of them: and makes it impossible for any to have invented such stories in after-ages, without a palpable detection of the cheat, when first invented; as impossible as to have imposed upon the senses of mankind, at the time when such public matters of fact were said to be done.

V. I do not say, that every thing which wants these four marks is false ; but, that nothing can be false which has them all.

I have no manner of doubt, that there was such a man as Julius Cæsar, that he fought at Pharsalia, was killed in the senate house ; and many other matters of fact of ancient times, though we keep no public observances in memory of them.

But this shews that the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ have come down to us better guarded than any other matters of fact, how true soever.

And yet our Deists, who would laugh any man out of the world, as an irrational brute, that should offer to deny Cæsar or Alexander, Homer or Virgil, their public works and actions ; do, at the same time, value themselves as the only men of wit and sense, of free, generous, and unbiassed judgments for ridiculing the histories of Moses and Christ, that are infinitely better attested, and guarded with infallible marks, which the others want.

VI. Besides that the importance of the subject would oblige all men to inquire more narrowly into the one, than the other : for what consequence is it to me, or to the world, whether there was such a man as Cæsar ; whether he beat or was beaten at Pharsalia ; whether Homer or Virgil wrote such books ; and whether what is related in the *Iliads* or *Æneids* be true or false ? It is not twopence up or down to any man in the world. And, therefore, it is worth no man's while to inquire into it, either to oppose or justify the truth of these relations.

But our very souls and bodies, both this life and eternity, are concerned in the truth of what is related in the holy scriptures ; and therefore, men

would be more inquisitive to search into the truth of these, than of any other matters of fact ; examine, and sift them narrowly ; and find out the deceit, if any such could be found : for it concerned them nearly ; and was of the last importance to them.

How unreasonable then is it to reject these matters of fact, so sifted, so examined, and so attested, as no other matters of fact in the world ever were ; and yet, to think it the most highly unreasonable, even to madness, to deny other matters of fact, which have not the thousandth part of their evidence, and are of no consequence at all to us, whether true or false.

VII. There are several other topics, from whence the truth of the Christian religion is evinced, to all who will judge by reason, and give themselves leave to consider. As the improbability that ten or twelve poor illiterate fishermen should form a design of converting the whole world to believe their delusions ; and the impossibility of their effecting it, without force of arms, learning, oratory, or any one visible thing that could recommend them : and to impose a doctrine, quite opposite to the lusts and pleasures of men, and all worldly advantages or enjoyments : and this in an age of so great learning and sagacity as that wherein the gospel was first preached : that these apostles should not only undergo all the scorn and contempt, but the severest persecutions and most cruel deaths that could be inflicted, in attestation to what themselves knew to be a mere deceit and forgery of their own contriving. Some have suffered for errors which they thought to be truth : but never any for what themselves knew to be lies. And the apostles must know what

they taught to be lies, if it was so, because they Acts iv. 20. spoke of those things which they said they had both *seen* and *heard*, had *looked upon*, and handled 1 John i. 1. with their *hands*, &c.

Neither can it be said, that they, perhaps, might have proposed some temporal advantages to themselves, but missed of them, and met with sufferings instead of them; for if it had been so, it is more than probable, that, when they saw their disappointment, they would have discovered their conspiracy; especially when they might not have only saved their lives, but got great rewards for doing of it. That not one of them should ever have been brought to do this!

But this is not all. For they tell us, that their Master bid them expect nothing but sufferings in this world. This is the tenure of all that gospel which they taught: and they told the same to all whom they converted. So that here was no disappointment.

For all that were converted by them were converted upon the certain expectation of sufferings, and bidden prepare for it. Christ commanded his disciples to take up their cross daily, and follow him; and told them, that in the world they should have tribulation: that whoever did not forsake father, mother, wife, children, lands, and their very lives, could not be his disciples: that he, who sought to save his life in this world, should lose it in the next.

Now that this despised doctrine of the cross should prevail so universally against the allurements of flesh and blood, and all the blandishments of this world; against the rage and persecution of all the kings and powers of the earth, must shew its original

to be divine; and its protector almighty. What is it else could conquer without arms, persuade without rhetoric; overcome enemies, disarm tyrants, and subdue empires without opposition?

VIII. We may add to all this, the testimonies of the most bitter enemies and persecutors of Christianity, both Jews and Gentiles, to the truth of the matter of fact of Christ, such as Josephus and Tacitus; of which the first flourished about forty years after the death of Christ, and the other about seventy years after: so that they were capable of examining into the truth, and wanted not prejudice and malice sufficient to have inclined them to deny the matter of fact itself, of Christ: but their confessing to it, as likewise Lucian, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian the apostate; the Mahometans since, and all other enemies of Christianity, that have arisen in the world, is an undeniable attestation to the truth of the matter of fact.

IX. But there is another argument, more strong and convincing than even this matter of fact: more than the certainty of what I see with my eyes: and which the apostle Peter called *a more sure word*, that is, proof, than what he saw and heard upon the holy mount, when our blessed Saviour was transfigured before him, and two other of the apostles: for having repeated that passage as a proof of that whereof they were eyewitnesses, and heard the voice from heaven giving attestation to our Lord Christ, 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18. he says, ver. 19. *We have also a more sure word of prophecy* for the proof of this Jesus being the Messiah, that is, the prophecies which had gone before of him, from the beginning of the world; and all exactly fulfilled in him.

Men may dispute an imposition or delusion upon our outward senses. But how can that be false, which has been so long, even from the beginning of the world, and so often by all the prophets, in several ages, foretold ; how can this be an imposition, or a forgery ?

This is particularly insisted on, in the Method with the Jews. And even the Deists must confess, that the book we call the Old Testament was in being, in the hands of the Jews, long before our Saviour came into the world. And if they will be at the pains to compare the prophecies that are there of the Messiah, with the fulfilling of them, as to time, place, and all other circumstances, in the person, birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed Saviour, they will find this proof, what our apostle here calls it, *a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts*. Which God grant. Here is no possibility of deceit or imposture.

Old prophecies (and all so agreeing) could not have been contrived to countenance a new cheat : and nothing could be a cheat, that could fulfil all these.

For this, therefore, I refer the Deists to the Method with the Jews.

I desire them likewise to look there, sect. XI. and consider the prophecies given so long ago, of which they see the fulfilling at this day, with their own eyes, of the state of the Jews for many ages past, and at present ; without a king, or priest, or temple, or sacrifice, scattered to the four winds, sifted as with a sieve, among all nations ; yet preserved, and always so to be a distinct people, from all others of

the whole earth. Whereas, those mighty monarchies which oppressed the Jews, and which commanded the world, in their turns; and had the greatest human prospect of perpetuity, were to be extinguished, as they have been, even that their names should be blotted out from under heaven.

As likewise, that as remarkable of our blessed Saviour, concerning the preservation and progress of the Christian church, when in her swaddling-clothes, consisting only of a few poor fishermen: not by the sword, as that of Mahomet, but under all the persecution of men and hell; which yet should not prevail against her.

But though I offer these, as not to be slighted by the Deists, to which they can shew nothing equal in all profane history; and in which it is impossible any cheat can lie; yet I put them not upon the same foot as the prophecies before mentioned, of the marks and coming of the Messiah, which have been since the world began.

And that general expectation of the whole earth, at the time of his coming, insisted upon in the Method with the Jews, sect. v. is greatly to be noticed.

But, I say, the foregoing prophecies of our Saviour are so strong a proof, as even miracles would not be sufficient to break their authority.

I mean, if it were possible that a true miracle could be wrought in contradiction to them. For that would be for God to contradict himself.

But no sign or wonder that could possibly be solved should shake this evidence.

It is this that keeps the Jews in their obstinacy. Though they cannot deny the matters of fact done by our blessed Saviour to be truly miracles, if so

done as said. Nor can they deny that they were so done, because they have all the four marks before mentioned, yet they cannot yield! Why? Because they think that the gospel is in contradiction to the law: which if it were, the consequence would be unavoidable, that both could not be true. To solve this is the business of the Method with the Jews. But the contradiction which they suppose is in their comments that they put upon the law; especially they expect a literal fulfilling of those promises of the restoration of Jerusalem, and outward glories of the church, of which there is such frequent mention in the books of Moses, the Psalms, and all the prophets. And many Christians do expect the same; and take those texts as literally as the Jews do. We do believe and pray for the conversion of the Jews. For this end they have been so miraculously preserved, according to the prophecies so long before of it. And when that time shall come, as they are the most honourable and ancient of all the nations on the earth, so will their church return to be the mother Christian church, as she was at first: and Rome must surrender to Jerusalem. Then all nations will flow thither; and even Ezekiel's temple may be literally built there, in the metropolis of the whole earth; which Jerusalem must be, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall meet with the conversion of the Jews. For no nation will then contend with the Jews, no church with Jerusalem for supremacy. All nations will be ambitious to draw their original from the Jews, *whose are the fathers, and from whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.*

Then will be fulfilled that outward grandeur and

restoration of the Jews and of Jerusalem, which they expect, pursuant to the prophecies.

They pretend not that this is limited to any particular time of the reign of the Messiah. They are sure it will not be at the beginning; for they expect to go through great conflicts and trials with their Messiah (as the Christian church has done) before his final conquest, and that they come to reign with him. So that this is no obstruction to their embracing of Christianity. They see the same things fulfilled in us, which they expect themselves; and we expect the same things they do.

I tell this to the Deists, lest they may think that the Jews have some stronger arguments than they know of; that they are not persuaded by the miracles of our blessed Saviour, and by the fulfilling of all the prophecies in him, that were made concerning the Messiah.

As I said before, I would not plead even miracles against these.

And if this is sufficient to persuade a Jew, it is much more so to a Deist, who labours not under these objections.

Besides, I would not seem to clash with that (in a sound sense) reasonable caution, used by Christian writers, not to put the issue of the truth wholly upon miracles, without this addition, when not done in contradiction to the revelations already given in the holy scriptures.

And they do it upon this consideration, that though it is impossible to suppose that God would work a real miracle, in contradiction to what he has already revealed: yet, men may be imposed upon by false and seeming miracles, and pretended reve-

lations, (as there are many examples, especially in the church of Rome,) and so may be shaken in the faith, if they keep not to the holy scriptures as their rule.

We are told, 2 Thess. ii. 9. *of him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.* And Rev. xiii. 14. xvi. 14. and xix. 20. of the Devil and false prophets working miracles. But the word, in all these places, is only *σημεῖα*, *signs*, that is, as it is rendered, Matth. xxiv. 24. which, though sometimes it may be used to signify real miracles, yet not always, nor in these places. For though every miracle be a sign and a wonder, yet every sign or wonder is not a miracle.

X. Here it may be proper to consider a common topic of the *Deists*, who, when they are not able to stand out against the evidence of fact, that such and such miracles have been done; then turn about, and deny such things to be miracles, at least that we can never be sure whether any wonderful thing that is shewn to us be a true or a false miracle.

And the great argument they go upon is this, that a miracle being that which exceeds the power of nature, we cannot know what exceeds it, unless we knew the utmost extent of the power of nature: and no man pretends to know that; therefore that no man can certainly know whether any event be miraculous. And, consequently, he may be cheated in his judgment betwixt true and false miracles.

To which I answer, that men may be so cheated. And there are many examples of it.

But that though we may not always know when we are cheated, yet we can certainly tell, in many cases, when we are not cheated.

For though we do not know the utmost extent of the power of nature, perhaps, in any one thing ; yet it does not follow, that we know not the nature of any thing, in some measure ; and that certainly too. For example ; though I do not know the utmost extent of the power of fire, yet I certainly know, that it is the nature of fire to burn : and that when proper fuel is administered to it, it is contrary to the nature of fire not to consume it. Therefore, if I see three men taken off the street, in their common wearing apparel, and, without any preparation, cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace ; and that the flame was so fierce, that it burnt up those men that threw them in ; and yet, that these who were thrown in, should walk up and down in the bottom of the furnace, and I should see a fourth person with them of glorious appearance, like the Son of God ; and that these men should come up again out of the furnace, without any harm, or so much as the smell of fire upon themselves or their clothes, I could not be deceived in thinking there was a stop put to the nature of fire, as to these men ; and that it had its effect upon the men whom it burned, at the same time.

Again ; Though I cannot tell how wonderful and sudden an increase of corn might be produced by the concurrence of many causes, as a warm climate, the fertility of the soil, &c. yet this I can certainly know, that there is not that natural force in the breath of two or three words spoken, to multiply one small loaf of bread so fast, in the breaking of it, as truly and really, not only in appearance and show to the eye, but to fill the bellies of several thousand hungry persons ; and that the fragments

should be much more than the bread was at first.

So neither in a word spoken, to raise the dead, cure diseases, &c.

Therefore, though we know not the utmost extent of the power of nature; yet we can certainly know what is contrary to the nature of several such things as we do know.

And therefore, though we may be cheated and imposed upon in many seeming miracles and wonders; yet there are some things wherein we may be certain.

But further, the Deists acknowledge a God, of an almighty power, who made all things.

Yet they would put it out of his power to make any revelation of his will to mankind. For if we cannot be certain of any miracle, how should we know when God sent any thing extraordinary to us?

Nay, how should we know the ordinary power of nature, if we knew not what exceeded it? If we know not what is natural, how do we know there is such a thing as nature? that all is not supernatural, all miracles, and so disputable, till we come to downright scepticism, and doubt the certainty of our outward senses, whether we see, hear, or feel; or all be not a miraculous illusion?

Which because I know the Deists are not inclined to do, therefore I will return to pursue my argument upon the conviction of our outward senses. Desiring only this, that they would allow the senses of other men to be as certain as their own. Which they cannot refuse, since without this they can have no certainty of their own.

XI. Therefore, from what has been said, the cause is summed up shortly in this, that though we cannot see what was done before our time, yet by the marks which I have laid down concerning the certainty of matters of fact done before our time, we may be as much assured of the truth of them, as if we saw them with our eyes; because whatever matter of fact has all the four marks before mentioned, could never have been invented and received but upon the conviction of the outward senses of all those who did receive it, as before is demonstrated. And therefore this topic which I have chosen does stand upon the conviction even of men's outward senses. And since you have confined me to one topic, I have not insisted upon the other, which I have only named.

XII. And now it lies upon the Deists, if they would appear as men of reason, to shew some matter of fact of former ages, which they allow to be true, that has greater evidence of its truth than the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ; otherwise they cannot, with any show of reason, reject the one, and yet admit of the other.

But I have given them greater latitude than this, for I have shewn such marks of the truth of the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ, as no other matters of fact of those times, however true, have, but these only: and I put it upon them to shew any forgery that has all these marks.

This is a short issue. Keep them close to this. This determines the cause all at once.

Let them produce their Apollonius Tyanæus, whose life was put into English by the execrable

Charles Blount^a, and compared, with all the wit and malice he was master of, to the life and miracles of our blessed Saviour.

Let them take aid from all the legends in the church of Rome, those pious cheats, the sorest disgraces of Christianity; and which have bid the fairest, of any one contrivance, to overturn the certainty of the miracles of Christ, and his apostles, and whole truth of the gospel, by putting them all upon the same foot; at least they are so understood by the generality of their devotees, though disowned and laughed at by the learned, and men of sense among them.

Let them pick and choose the most probable of all the fables of the heathen deities, and see if they can find, in any of these, the four marks before mentioned.

Otherwise let them submit to the irrefragable certainty of the Christian religion.

XIII. But if, notwithstanding all that is said, the Deists will still contend, that all this is but priestcraft, the invention of priests, for their own profit, &c. then

^a The hand of that scorner, which durst write such outrageous blasphemy against his Maker, the divine vengeance has made his own executioner. Which I would not have mentioned, (because the like judgment has befallen others,) but that the Theistical club have set up this as a principle; and printed a vindication of this same Blount, for murdering himself, by way of justification of self-murder. Which some of them have since, as well as formerly, horridly practised upon themselves. Therefore this is no common judgment to which they are delivered, but a visible mark set upon them, to shew how far God has forsaken them; and as a caution to all Christians to beware of them, and not to come near the tents of these wicked men, lest they perish in their destruction, both of soul and body.

they will give us an idea of priests far different from what they intend :

1. For then we must look upon these priests, not only as the cunningest and wisest of mankind, but we shall be tempted to adore them as deities, who have such power, as to impose, at their pleasure, upon the senses of mankind, to make them believe, that they had practised such public institutions, enacted them by laws, taught them to their children, &c. when they had never done any of these things, or even so much as heard of them before : and then, upon the credit of their believing that they had done such things as they never did, to make them further believe, upon the same foundation, whatever they pleased to impose upon them, as to former ages : I say, such a power as this must exceed all that is human ; and, consequently, make us rank these priests far above the condition of mortals.

2. Nay, this were to make them outdo all that has ever been related of the infernal powers : for though their legerdemain has extended to deceive some unwary beholders, and their power of working some seeming miracles has been great, yet it never reached, nor ever was supposed to reach so far, as to deceive the senses of all mankind, in matters of such public and notorious nature as those of which we now speak ; to make them believe, that they had enacted laws for such public observances, continually practised them, taught them to their children, and had been instructed in them themselves, from their childhood, if they had never enacted, practised, taught, or been taught such things.

3. And as this exceeds all the power of hell and devils, so is it more than ever God Almighty has

done since the foundation of the world. None of the miracles that he has shewn, or belief which he has required to any thing that he has revealed, has ever contradicted the outward senses of any one man in the world, much less of all mankind together. For miracles being appeals to our outward senses, if they should overthrow the certainty of our outward senses, must destroy with it all their own certainty, as to us; since we have no other way to judge of a miracle exhibited to our senses, than upon the supposition of the certainty of our senses, upon which we give credit to a miracle, that is shewn to our senses.

4. This, by the way, is a yet unanswered argument against the miracle of transubstantiation, and shews the weakness of the defence which the church of Rome offers for it, (from whom the Socinians have licked it up, and of late have gloried much in it amongst us,) that the doctrines of the Trinity, or incarnation, contain as great seeming absurdities as that of transubstantiation: for I would ask, which of our senses it is which the doctrines of the Trinity or incarnation do contradict? Is it our seeing, hearing, feeling, taste, or smell? Whereas transubstantiation does contradict all these. Therefore the comparison is exceedingly short, and out of purpose. But to return.

If the Christian religion be a cheat, and nothing else but the invention of priests, and carried on by their craft, it makes their power and wisdom greater than that of men, angels, or devils; and more than God himself ever yet shewed or expressed, to deceive and impose upon the senses of mankind, in such public and notorious matters of fact.

XIV. And this miracle, which the Deists must run into to avoid those recorded of Moses and Christ, is much greater, and more astonishing than all the scriptures tell of them.

So that these men, who laugh at all miracles, are now obliged to account for the greatest of all, how the senses of mankind could be imposed upon in such public matters of fact.

And how then can they make the priests the most contemptible of all mankind, since they make them the sole authors of this, the greatest of miracles.

XV. And since the Deists (these men of sense and reason) have so vile and mean an idea of the priests of all religions, why do they not recover the world out of the possession and government of such blockheads? Why do they suffer kings and states to be led by them; to establish their deceits by laws, and inflict penalties upon the opposers of them? Let the Deists try their hands; they have been trying, and are now busy about it. And free liberty they have. Yet have they not prevailed, nor ever yet did prevail in any civilized or generous nation. And though they have made some inroads among the Hottentots, and some other the most brutal part of mankind, yet are they still exploded, and priests have and do prevail against them, among not only the greatest, but best part of the world, and the most glorious for arts, learning, and war.

XVI. For as the Devil does ape God in his institutions of religion; his feasts, sacrifices, &c. so likewise in his priests, without whom, no religion, whether true or false, can stand. False religion is but a corruption of the true. The true was before it; though it be followed close upon the heels.

The revelation made to Moses is elder than any history extant in the heathen world. The heathens, in imitation of him, pretended likewise to their revelations: but I have given those marks which distinguish them from the true: none of them have those four marks before mentioned.

Now the Deists think all revelations to be equally pretended, and a cheat: and the priests of all religions to be the same contrivers and jugglers; and therefore they proclaim war equally against all, and are equally engaged to bear the brunt of all.

And if the contest be only betwixt the Deists and the priests, which of them are the men of the greatest parts and sense, let the effects determine it; and let the Deists yield the victory to their conquerors, who, by their own confession, carry all the world before them.

XVII. If the Deists say, that this is because all the world are blockheads, as well as those priests who govern them; that all are blockheads, except the Deists, who vote themselves only to be men of sense: this (besides the modesty of it) will spoil their great and beloved topic, in behalf of what they call natural religion, against the revealed, viz. appealing to the common reason of mankind: this they set up against revelation; think this to be sufficient for all the uses of men, here or hereafter, (if there be any after state,) and therefore that there is no use of revelation: this common reason they advance as infallible, at least as the surest guide, yet now cry out upon it, when it turns against them: when this common reason runs after revelation, (as it always has done,) then common reason is a beast, and we must look for reason, not from the common

sentiments of mankind, but only among the beaux, the Deists.

XVIII. Therefore, if the Deists would avoid the mortification (which will be very uneasy to them) to yield and submit to be subdued and hewed down before the priests, whom of all mankind they hate and despise; if they would avoid this, let them confess, as the truth is, that religion is no invention of priests, but of divine original: that priests were instituted by the same Author of religion; and that their order is a perpetual and living monument of the matters of fact of their religion, instituted from the time that such matters of fact were said to be done, as the Levites from Moses, the apostles, and succeeding clergy, from Christ, to this day. That no heathen priests can say the same: they were not appointed by the gods whom they served, but by others in after-ages: they cannot stand the test of the four rules before mentioned, which the Christian priests can do, and they only. Now the Christian priesthood, as instituted by Christ himself, and continued by succession to this day, being as impregnable and flagrant a testimony to the truth of the matters of fact of Christ, as the sacraments, or any other public institutions: besides that, if the priesthood were taken away, the sacraments, and other public institutions, which are administered by their hands, must fall with them: therefore the Devil has been most busy, and bent his greatest force, in all ages against the priesthood, knowing that if that goes down, all goes with it.

XIX. With the Deists, in this cause, are joined the Quakers, and other of our dissenters, who throw off the succession of our priesthood, (by which only

it can be demonstrated,) together with the sacraments and public festivals. And if the Devil could have prevailed to have these dropt, the Christian religion would lose the most undeniable and demonstrative proof for the truth of the matter of fact of our Saviour, upon which the truth of his doctrine does depend. Therefore we may see the artifice and malice of the Devil in all these attempts. And let those wretched instruments, whom he ignorantly (and some, by a misguided zeal) has deluded thus to undermine Christianity, now at last look back and see the snare in which they have been taken: for if they had prevailed, or ever should, Christianity dies with them. At least, it will be rendered precarious, as a thing of which no certain proof can be given. Therefore let those of them, who have any zeal for the truth, bless God that they have not prevailed; and quickly leave them: and let all others be aware of them.

And let us consider and honour the priesthood, sacraments, and other public institutions of Christ, not only as means of grace, and helps to devotion, but as the great evidences of the Christian religion.

Such evidences as no pretended revelation ever had, or can have. Such as do plainly distinguish it from all foolish legends and impostures whatsoever.

XX. And now, last of all, if one word of advice would not be lost upon men who think so unmeasurably of themselves as the Deists, you may represent to them, what a condition they are in, who spend that life and sense, which God has given them, in ridiculing the greatest of his blessings, his revelations of Christ, and by Christ, to redeem those from eternal misery who shall believe in him and obey

his laws. And that God, in his wonderful mercy and wisdom, has so guarded his revelation, as that it is past the power of men or devils to counterfeit : and that there is no denying of them, unless we will be so absurd as to deny, not only the reason, but the certainty of the outward senses, not only of one, or two, or three, but of mankind in general : that this case is so very plain, that nothing but want of thought can hinder any to discover it : that they must yield it to be so plain, unless they can shew some forgery, which has all the four marks before set down. But if they cannot do this, they must quit their cause, and yield a happy victory over themselves : or else sit down under all that ignominy, with which they have loaded the priests, of being, not only the most pernicious, but (what will gall them more) the most inconsiderate and inconsiderable of mankind.

Therefore, let them not think it an undervaluing of their worthiness, that their whole cause is comprised within so narrow a compass, and no more time bestowed upon it than it is worth.

But let them rather reflect, how far they have been all this time from Christianity; whose rudiments they are yet to learn : how far from the way of salvation : how far the race of their lives is run, before they have set one step in the road to heaven : and therefore, how much diligence they ought to use, to redeem all that time they have lost, lest they lose themselves for ever ; and be convinced, by a dreadful experience, when it is too late, that the gospel is a truth, and of the last consequence.

*A Letter to a Gentleman who had been converted
by reading the Short and Easy Method
with the Deists.*

SIR,

I HAVE read over your papers with great satisfaction, and I heartily bless God with you, and for you, that he has had mercy upon you, and opened your eyes to see the wondrous things of his law, to convince you of those irrefragable proofs he has afforded for the truth and authority of the holy scriptures, such as no other writing upon earth can pretend to, and which are incompatible with any forgery or deceit. He has given you likewise that true spirit of repentance to bring forth the fruits thereof, that is, to make what satisfaction you can for the injuries you have done to religion, by answering what has been published formerly by yourself against it, and being converted, you endeavour to strengthen your brethren.

I. Creation.

You have laid the true foundation of the being of God, against the Atheist; of his creation of the world, and providence, against the assertors of blind chance. If all be chance, then their thoughts are so too, and there is no reasoning or argument in the world.

Others, because they know not what to say, suppose the world, and all things in it, to have been from eternity, and to have gone on, as now, in a

constant succession, of men begetting men, trees springing from trees, &c. without any beginning.

But if it was always as it is now, then every thing had a beginning, every man, bird, beast, tree, &c.: and what has a beginning cannot be without a beginning.

Therefore, as it is evident that nothing can make itself, it is equally evident that a succession of things made must have a beginning. A succession of beginnings cannot be without a beginning; for that would be literally a beginning without a beginning, which is a contradiction in terms.

II. *Providence.*

And to deny providence in the first Cause is the denying of a God: whence had we our providence: for we find we have a providence to forecast and contrive how to preserve and govern that which we make or acquire; therefore there must be a providence much more eminently in God, to preserve and govern all the works which he has made. *He that made the eye, does he not see?* And he who put providence into the heart of man, has he none himself?

And the glory of his wisdom and power seems greater to us in the acts of his providence, than even in those of creation, especially in his governing the actions of free agents, without taking from them the freedom of their will to do as they list, and turning their very evil into good, by the almightiness of his wisdom. We see great part of this every day before our eyes, in his turning the counsels of the wise into foolishness, and trapping the wicked in the works of their own hands. This strikes us

more sensibly, and is nearer to us than the making of a tree or a star; and we feel that overruling power in his providence which we contemplate in his creation.

When the sins of men are increased, to provoke God to take vengeance, he permits the spirit of fury to incline their wills to war, and destruction of each other, *and nation rises up against nation*; and when in his mercy he thinks the punishment is sufficient, he calms their rage, like the roaring of the sea, and there is peace. And they are so free agents in all this, that they think it is all their own doing; and so really it is, though under the unseen direction of a superior power.

But not only in the public transactions of the world his providence is observable; there is no man, who has taken notice of his own life, but must find it as to his very private affairs, a thought sometimes darting into his mind to rid him out of a difficulty, or shew him an advantage which he could not find in much considering before. At other times a man's mind is so clouded, as if his eyes were shut, that he cannot see his way: again, several events which he thought most funest, and his utter ruin, he finds afterwards to be much for the best, and that he had been undone, if that had not happened which he feared. On the other hand, many things which he thought for his great benefit he has found to be for his hurt. This shews a Providence, which sees further than we can, and disposes all our actions, though done in the full freedom of our own will, to what events, either good or bad for us, as he pleases.

III. *Revelation.*

But these considerations from the creation and providence, though admirable and glorious, are within the oracles of reason, and are but earthly things in comparison of those heavenly things which God has revealed to man *at sundry times and in divers manners*, and are recorded in the holy scriptures, and which otherwise it was impossible for man to have known: *For what man is he that can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of the Lord is? For the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain. For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things. And hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find things that are before us: but the things that are in heaven who hath searched out?*

Wisd. ix.
13—16.

This then must be purely the subject of revelation; but when the Deist is come thus far, he is entered into a wide field; for all religions, Jewish, heathen, Christian, and Mahometan, pretend to revelation for their original.

To clear this point was the design of the Short Method with the Deists, which gave the first opportunity to our conversation.

The heathen and Mahometan religions not only want those marks (there set down) which ascertain the truth of fact, but their morals and worship are impure, and inconsistent with the attributes of God; as the indulgence of fornication and uncleanness among the heathen, and their human sacrifices, (most abhorrent to the God of holiness and mercy,)

and the filthy obscenity of their very *sacra*; besides the great defect of their morals, which knew no such thing as humility, forgiveness of injuries, loving their enemies, and returning good for evil. Some of their philosophers spoke against revenging of injuries, as bringing greater injury to ourselves, or not worth the while; but not upon the account of humanity and love to our brethren, and doing them good, though they did evil to us; and by the word *humilitas* they meant only a lowness and dejection of mind, which is a vice; but they had no notion of it as a virtue, in having a low opinion of one's self, and in honour preferring others before us: this they thought a vice, and abjection of spirits. You may see pride and self-conceit run through all their philosophy, besides their principle of increasing their empire, by conquering other countries who did them no harm, whom they called Barbarians.

Into this class comes likewise the sensual paradise proposed by Mahomet, and his principle of propagating his religion by the sword.

The Jewish religion has all the certainty of fact, and its morals are good; but because of the hardness of their hearts, they came not up to the primitive purity, as in case of polygamy and divorce, wherein our blessed Saviour reduces them to the original, that from the beginning it was not so; and in several other cases mentioned in his sermon upon the mount.

Therefore the perfection of morals, and of the true knowledge of God, was reserved for the Christian religion, which has, in more abundant manner than even the Jewish, the infallible marks of the truth of the facts, in the multitude and notoriety of

the miracles wrought by our blessed Saviour beyond those of Moses; which fully answers the objection of the Jews, that Christ wrought his miracles by Beelzebub: for then, as he said to them, *By whom do your children cast out devils?* Was it by the Spirit of God or Beelzebub that Moses and the prophets wrought their miracles?

Then from the purity and heavenliness of his doctrine, all levelled to destroy the kingdom of Satan, those wicked principles and idolatrous worship which he had set up in the world, the other answer of our blessed Saviour concludes demonstratively, of a *kingdom divided against itself*, that if Satan cast out Satan, to promote that doctrine which Christ taught, we must alter our notion of the Devil, and suppose him to be good, and his kingdom must then be at an end; which we see not yet done, for wickedness still reigns in the world.

IV. Object. *As to the holy Trinity.*

Against these things reason has nothing to object, but then prejudices are raised up against what is revealed, as being of things that are above our reason, and out of its reach; as chiefly the doctrine of the blessed Trinity.

In answer to which, we may consider, that if such things were not above our reason, there needed no revelation of them, but only a bare proposal of them to our reason, made by any body, without any authority, and their own evidence would carry them through.

In the next place, we must acknowledge that there are many things in the divine nature far out of the reach of our reason. That it must be so: for how

can finite comprehend infinite? Who can think what eternity is? A duration without beginning, or succession of parts or time! Who can so much as imagine or frame any idea of a Being neither made by itself nor by any other? of Omnipresence? of a boundless Immensity? &c.

Yet all this reason obliges us to allow, as the necessary consequences of a first Cause.

And where any thing is established upon the full proof of reason, there ten thousand objections or difficulties, though we cannot answer them, are of no force at all to overthrow it. Nothing can do that, but to refute those reasons upon which it is established; till when, the truth and certainty of the thing remains unshaken, though we cannot explain it, nor solve the difficulties that arise from it.

And if it is so, upon the point of reason, much more upon that of revelation, where the subject-matter is above our reason, and could never have been found out by it.

All to be done in that case is, to satisfy ourselves of the truth of the fact, that such things were revealed of God, and are no imposture. This is done, as to the holy scriptures, by the four marks before mentioned.

And as to the contradiction alleged in three being one, it is no contradiction, unless it be said, that three are one in the selfsame respect: for in divers respects there is no sort of difficulty that one may be three, or three thousand; as one army may consist of many thousands, and yet it is but one army: there is but one human nature, and yet there are multitudes of persons who partake of that nature.

Now it is not said, that the three Persons in the

divine nature are one Person ; that would be a contradiction : but it is said, that the three Persons are one nature. They are not three and one, in the same respect ; they are three as to persons, and one as to nature. Here is no contradiction.

Again, that may be a contradiction in one nature which is not so in another : for example, it is a contradiction, that a man can go two yards or miles as soon as one, because two is but one and another one : yet this is no contradiction to sight, which can reach a star as soon as the top of a chimney ; and the sun darts his rays in one instant from heaven to earth : but more than all these is the motion of thought, to which no distance of place is any interruption ; which can arrive at Japan as soon as at a yard's distance ; and can run into the immensity of possibilities.

Now there are no words possible whereby to give any notion or idea of sight or light to a man born blind ; and consequently to reconcile the progress of sight or light to him from being an absolute contradiction ; because he can measure it no otherwise than according to the motions of legs or arms, for he knows none other : therefore we cannot charge that as a contradiction in one nature, which is so in another, unless we understand both natures perfectly well : and therefore we cannot charge that as a contradiction in the incomprehensible nature of being three and one, though we found it to be so in our nature ; which we do not, because, as before said, they are not three and one in the same respect.

Now let us consider further, that though there is no comparison betwixt finite and infinite, yet we

have nearer resemblances of the three and one in God, than there is of sight to a man born blind: for there is nothing in any of the other four senses that has any resemblance at all to that of seeing, or that can give such a man any notion whatever of it.

But we find in our own nature, which is said to be made after the image of God, a very near resemblance of his holy Trinity, and of the different operations of each of the divine Persons.

For example; to know a thing present, and to remember what is past, and to love or hate, are different operations of our mind, and performed by different faculties of it. Of these, the understanding is the father faculty, and gives being to things, as to us; for what we know not is to us as if it were not; this answers to creation. From this faculty proceeds the second, that of memory, which is a preserving of what the understanding has created to us. Then the third faculty, that of the will, which loves or hates, proceeds from both the other, for we cannot love or hate what is not first created by the understanding, and preserved to us by the memory.

And though these are different faculties, and their operations different, that the second proceeds from the first, or is begotten by it; and the third proceeds from the first and second in conjunction, so that one is before the other, in order of nature, yet not in time; for they are all congenial, and one is as soon in the soul as the other; and yet they make not three souls, but one soul. And though their operations are different, and the one proceeds from the other, yet no one can act without the other, and

they all concur to every act of each; for in understanding and remembering, there is a concurrent act of the will to consent to such understanding or remembering; so that no one can act without the other: in which sense, none is before or after the other, nor can any of them be, or exist, without the other.

But what we call faculties in the soul we call Persons in the Godhead; because there are personal actions attributed to each of them: as that of sending, and being sent, to take flesh, and be born, &c.

And we have no other word whereby to express it; we speak it after the manner of men; nor could we understand, if we heard any of those *unspeakable words* which express the divine nature in its proper essence; therefore we must make allowances, and great ones, when we apply words of our nature to the infinite and eternal Being. We must not argue strictly and philosophically from them, more than from God's being said to repent, to be angry, &c. They are words *ad captum*, in condescension to our weak capacities, and without which we could not understand.

But this I say, that there are nearer resemblances afforded to us of this ineffable mystery of the holy Trinity, than there is betwixt one of our outward senses and another; than there is to a blind man of colours, or of the motions of light, or sight: and a contradiction in the one will not infer a contradiction in the other; though it is impossible to be solved, as in the instance before given of a man born blind, till we come to know both natures distinctly.

And if we had not the experience of the different

faculties of our mind, the contradiction would appear irreconcilable to all our philosophy, how three could be one, each distinct from the other, yet but one soul: one proceeding from, or being begot by the other; and yet all coeval, and none before or after the other: and as to the difference betwixt faculties and persons, substance and subsistence, it is a puzzling piece of philosophy. And though we give not a distinct subsistence to a faculty, it has an existence, and one faculty can no more be another than one person can be another: so that the case seems to be alike in both, as to what concerns our present difficulty of three and one; besides what before is said, that by the word *person*, when applied to God, (for want of a proper word whereby to express it,) we must mean something infinitely different from personality among men. And therefore from a contradiction in the one (suppose it granted) we cannot charge a contradiction in the other, unless we understand it as well as the other; for how else can we draw the parallel?

What a vain thing is our philosophy, when we would measure the incomprehensible nature by it! when we find it nonplused in our own nature, and that in many instances. If I am all in one room, is it not a contradiction that any part of me should be in another room? Yet it was a common saying among philosophers, that the soul is all in all, and all in every part of the body: how is the same individual soul present, at one and the same time, to actuate the distant members of the body, without either multiplication or division of the soul? Is there any thing in body can bear any resemblance to this, without a manifest contradiction? Nay, even

as to bodies, is any thing more a self-evident principle, than that the cause must be before the effect? yet the light and heat of the sun are as old as the sun; and supposing the sun to be eternal, they would be as eternal.

And as light and heat are of the nature of the sun, and as the three faculties before mentioned are of the nature of the soul, so that the soul could not be a soul if it wanted any of them; so may we, from small things to great, apprehend without any contradiction, that the three Persons are of the very nature and essence of the Deity, and so of the same substance with it; and though one proceeding from the other, (as the faculties of the soul do,) yet that all three are consubstantial, coeternal, and of necessary existence as God is; for that these three are God, and God is these three. As understanding, memory, and will, are a soul, and a soul is understanding, memory, and will.

I intend (God willing) to treat of this subject more largely by itself; but I have said thus much here, to clear the way from that objection of rejecting revelation, (though we are infallibly sure of the fact,) because of the supposed contradiction to our reason, in comparing it with our earthly things.

V. Of the differences among Christians.

But now that from all the proofs of the certainty of the revelation we are come to fix in Christianity, our labour is not yet at an end: for here you see multiplicity of sects and division, which our blessed Saviour foretold should come, for the probation of the elect; as some Canaanites were left in the land to teach the Israelites the use of war, lest by too

profound a peace, they might grow lazy and stupid, and become an easy prey to their enemies. So might Christianity be lost among us; if we had nothing to do, it would dwindle and decay and corrupt by degrees, as water stagnates by standing still: but when we are put to *contend earnestly for the faith*, it quickens our zeal, keeps us upon our guard, trims our lamp, and furbishes the sword of the Spirit, which might otherwise rust in its scabbard. And it gives great opportunity to shew us the wonderful providence and protection of God over his church, in preserving her against a visibly unequal force. And in this contest, to some this high privilege is *granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe* Phil. i. 29. *on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* These go to make up the noble army of martyrs and confessors, for ever triumphant in heaven. Others conquer even here on earth, that God's wonderful doings may be known to the children of men.

But as he who builds a tower ought first to compute the expense, and he who goes to war, to consider his strength; so our blessed Saviour has instructed us, that he who will be his disciple must resolve beforehand to take up his cross daily, *to forsake father and mother, and wife and children, and lands, and life itself*, when he cannot keep them with the truth and sincerity of the gospel. Therefore we must put on *the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day, and having overcome, all, to stand; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in high places.*

And what is it we wrestle for? for the *great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, &c.*

VI. *The doctrine of satisfaction.*

Here is the foundation of the Christian religion, that when man had sinned, and was utterly unable to make any satisfaction for his sin, God sent his own Son to take upon him our flesh, and, in the same nature that offended, to make full satisfaction for the sins of the whole world by his perfect obedience, and the sacrifice of himself upon the cross.

Some say, what need any satisfaction? might not God forgive without it? it would shew greater mercy. But these men consider not that God is not only just, but he is justice itself; justice in the abstract; he is essential justice. And justice, by its nature, must exact to the utmost farthing, else it were not justice: to remit is mercy, it is not justice: and the attributes of God must not fight and oppose each other; they must all stand infinite and complete. You may say then, how can God forgive at all? how can infinite mercy and justice stand together?

This question could never have been answered, if God himself had not shewed it to us in the wonderful economy of our redemption: for here is his justice satisfied to the least iota by the perfect obedience and passion of Christ (who is God) in the same human nature that offended. Here is infinite wisdom expressed in this means found out for our salvation; and infinite mercy in affording it to us. Thus all his attributes are satisfied and filled up to the brim, they contradict not, but exalt each other. His mercy exalts and magnifies his justice: his justice exalts his mercy, and both his infinite wisdom.

Here is a view of God, beyond what all the oracles of reason could ever have found out, from his works of creation or common providence! These shew his works, but this his nature, it is himself! the very face of God! before which the angels veil their faces, and desire to look into this abyss of goodness and power and wisdom, which they will never be able to fathom, but still feed upon, and search further and further into it, with adoration, to eternity! And they worship our manhood thus taken into God! and rejoice to be ministering spirits to us, while upon earth.

This you and I have talked over at large; and this I gave you as the sum and substance, the alpha and omega, of the Christian religion. And now I repeat it as the surest criterion to guide a man in the difficulty before us, that is, in the choice of a church, in the midst of all that variety there is among Christians. Whoever hold not this doctrine, join not with them, nor bid them God speed.

VII. *The Socinians.*

This will save you from the Socinians, or the Unitarians, as they now call themselves in England, who expressly deny this doctrine: for they deny the doctrine of the holy Trinity, and the divinity of Christ, upon which it is founded. They consider Christ no otherwise than a mere man; and propose him only as a teacher and good example to us. But then they are confounded, with all their pretence to wit and reason, to give any account for his death, which was not necessary to teaching, or being an example; that, an angel or a prophet might have been. Then they say, that he died to confirm the

truth of his doctrine: but set this doctrine of satisfaction aside, and he taught nothing new, except the improvement of some morals: besides, dying does not confirm the truth of any doctrine; it only shews, that he who dies for it does himself believe it. Some have died for errors; and the Socinian doctrine affords no comfort, no assurance to us. For if we consider Christ only as a teacher or example, we have not followed his precepts nor example: here is nothing but matter of condemnation to us. But if we look upon him as our surety, who has paid our debt, as our sacrifice, atonement, and propitiation for our sins, and that we are saved by his blood, (which is the language of the holy scriptures, of which the Socinians know no meaning,) this is a rock and infallible assurance.

VIII. *The church of Rome.*

As the Socinians have totally rejected this doctrine, so the church of Rome has greatly vitiated and depressed it, by their doctrine of merit, and their own satisfaction, which they make part of their sacrament of penance. On this is founded their purgatory, wherein souls who had not made full satisfaction upon earth, must complete it there. They deny not the satisfaction of Christ, but join their own with it, as if it were not sufficient.

IX. *The dissenters.*

On the other hand, our dissenters run to the contrary extreme: and because our good works must have no share in the satisfaction for sin, which they cannot, as being unworthy, and mixed with our infirmities, and our sin; therefore they make them

not necessary, nor of any effect towards our salvation. They say that Christ did not die for any but the elect, in whom he sees no sin, let them live never so wickedly. They damn the far greatest part of the world by irreversible decrees of reprobation, and say, that their good works are hateful to God, and that it is not possibly in their power to be saved, let them believe as they will, and live never so religiously; they take away free-will in man, and make him a perfect machine. They make God the author of sin, to create men on purpose to damn them; and to punish them eternally for not doing what was not in their power to do, and for doing what he had made impossible for them not to do. They make his promises and threatenings to be of no effect, nay, to be a sort of burlesquing, and insulting those whom he has made miserable; which is an hideous blasphemy!

For a solution in this matter, both as to faith and works, I refer you to the Homilies of Faith and Salvation, and of Good Works, where you will find the true Christian doctrine set forth clearly and solidly.

I will not anticipate what you design for your second part, by entering into other disputes there are among Christians; only this will be exceeding necessary to settle well the notion of the church of Christ, to which all do pretend in various manners.

X. The true notion of the church.

First, therefore, the church must be considered not only as a sect, that is, a company of people believing such and such tenets, like the several sects of the heathen philosophers; but as a society under

government, with governors appointed by Christ, invested with such powers and authority to admit into, and exclude out of the society, and govern the affairs of the body.

This power was delegated by Christ to his apostles and their successors to the end of the world: accordingly the apostles did ordain bishops in all the churches which they planted throughout the whole world, as the supreme governors, and centre of unity, each in his own church. These were obliged to keep unity and communion with one another; which is therefore called *catholic communion*. And all these churches considered together are *the catholic church*: as the several nations of the earth are called *the world*.

XI. *Of an universal bishop.*

And Christ appointed no universal bishop over his church, more than an universal monarch over the world. No such thing was known in the primitive church, till it was set up first by John bishop of Constantinople, then by the bishop of Rome, in the seventh century. And as the whole world is one kingdom to God, as it is written, *his kingdom ruleth over all*, so the several churches of the world are one church to Christ. And the church of Rome saying that she is that one church, or, Shew us another which can dispute it with us, in universal, antiquity, &c. is the same as if France (for example) should say, Who can compare with me? therefore I am the universality or monarch; shew me another. The thing appears ridiculous at the first proposal; for it must be said to Rome or to France, that if you were ten times greater than you are, you are

yet but a part of the whole: and to say, Who else pretends to it? Why none. And it would be nonsense in any who did pretend to it; one part may be bigger than another, but one part can never be the whole. And all results in this, whether Christ did appoint an universal bishop over all the churches in the world? and we are willing to leave the issue to that, if it can appear either from scripture or antiquity. Besides, the reason of the thing; for as Gregory the Great urged against John of Constantinople, if there was an universal bishop, the universal church must fall, if that one universal bishop fell; and so all must come to centre in one poor, fallible, mortal man.

This obliged the pope to run into another monstrous extreme, and set up for infallibility in his own person, as the only successor of St. Peter, and heir of those promises made to him, *Super hanc petram*, &c. This was the current doctrine of the divines in the church of Rome in former ages, as you may see in *Bellarmino, de Rom. Pontif.* lib. IV. c. 5; where he carries this so high, as to assert, that if the pope did command the practice of vice, and forbid virtue, the church were bound to believe that virtue was vice, and that vice was virtue. And in his preface, he calls this absolute supremacy of the pope, the *summa rei Christianæ*, the sum and foundation of the Christian religion: and that to deny it, was not only a simple error, but a pernicious heresy.

This was old popery: but now it is generally decried by the papists themselves; yet no pope has been brought to renounce it, they will not quit claim.

When they departed from the infallibility of the pope, they sought to place it in their general councils: but these are not always in being; and so their infallibility must drop for several ages together; which will not consist with their argument, that God is obliged by his goodness to afford always an outward and living judge and guide to his church. Besides, that instances are found where those councils they call *general* have contradicted one another.

For which reasons, others of them place the infallibility in the church diffusive: but this upon their scheme is indefinite, and the judge of controversy must be sought among numberless individuals, of whom no one is the judge or guide.

XII. *Of infallibility in the church.*

But there is an infallibility in the church, not personal in any one or all of Christians put together; for millions of fallibles can never make an infallible. But the infallibility consists in the nature of the evidence, which, having all the four marks mentioned in the Short Method with the Deists, cannot possibly be false. As you and I believe there is such a town as Constantinople, that there was such a man as Henry VIII. as much as if we had seen them with our eyes: not from the credit of any historian or traveller, all of whom are fallible; but from the nature of the evidence, wherein it is impossible for men to have conspired and carried it on without contradiction, if it were false.

Thus, whatever doctrine has been taught in the church, (according to the rule of Vincentius Lirinensis,) *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*, is the Chris-

tian doctrine; for in this case, such doctrine is a fact, and having the foresaid marks must be a true fact, viz. that such doctrine was so taught and received.

This was the method taken in the council called at Alexandria against Arius; it was asked by Alexander the archbishop who presided, *Quis unquam talia audivit*^a? Who ever heard of this doctrine before? And it being answered by all the bishops there assembled in the negative, it was concluded a novel doctrine, and contrary to what had been universally received in the Christian church. Thus every doctrine may be reduced to fact; for it is purely fact, whether such doctrine was received or not?

And a council assembled upon such an occasion stands as evidence of the fact, not as judges of the faith; which they cannot alter by their votes or authority.

A council has authority in matters of discipline in the church; but in matters of faith, what is called their authority is their attestation to the truth of fact; which if it has the marks before mentioned, must be infallibly true: not from the infallibility of any or all of the persons, but from the nature of the evidence, as before is said.

And this is the surest rule whereby to judge of doctrines, and to know what the catholic church had believed and taught, as received from the apostles.

And they who refuse to be tried by this rule, who say we care not what was believed by the catholic church, either in former ages or now; we think our own interpretations or criticisms upon

^a Socrat. Hist. lib. I. c. 5. Gr.

such a text of as great authority as theirs; these are justly to be suspected, nay, it is evident that they are broaching some novel doctrines which cannot stand this test. Besides the monstrous arrogance in such a pretence, these overthrow the foundation of that sure and infallible evidence upon which Christianity itself does stand; and reduce all to a blind enthusiasm.

XIII. *Of episcopacy.*

But further, sir, in your search after a church, you must not only consider the doctrine but the government; that is, as I said before, you must consider the church not only as a sect, but as a society: for though every society founded upon the belief of such tenets may be called a sect, yet every sect is not a society. Now a society cannot be without government, for it is that which makes a society; and a government cannot be without governors. The apostles were instituted by Christ the first governors of his church; and with them and their successors he has promised to be to the end of the world. The apostles did ordain bishops, as governors, in all the churches which they planted throughout the whole world; and these bishops were esteemed the successors of the apostles, each in his own church, from the beginning to this day. This was the current notion and language of antiquity; *Omnes apostolorum successores sunt*: that all bishops were the successors of the apostles; as St. Jerom speaks, *Epist. ad Evagr.* And St. Ignatius, who was constituted by the apostles bishop of Antioch, salutes the church of the Trallians, Ἐν τῷ πληρώματι ἐν ἀποστολικῷ χαρακτῆρι: *in the plenitude of the apostolical*

character. Thus it continued from the days of the apostles to those of John Calvin: in all the which time there was not any one church in the whole Christian world that was not episcopal. But now it is said by our dissenters, that there is no need of succession from the apostles or those bishops instituted by them: that they can make governors over themselves whom they list: and what signifies the government of the church, so the doctrine be pure? But this totally dissolves the church as a society; the government of which consists in the right and title of the governor. And as the apostle says, *No* Heb. v. 4. *man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*. And the dispute betwixt him and Korah was not as to any point either of doctrine or worship, but merely upon that of church government. And St. Jude, ver. 11, brings down the same case to that of the Christian church; and reason carries it as to all societies. They who will not obey the lawful governor, but set up another in opposition to him, are no longer of the society, but enemies to it, and justly forfeit all the rights and privileges of it.

Now considering that all the promises in the gospel are made to the church, what a dreadful thing must it be to be excluded from all these!

Besides, the church is called *the pillar and ground of the truth*, as being a society instituted by Christ for the support and preservation of the faith. This no particular church can attribute to itself, otherwise than as being a part of the whole: and therefore, as St. Cyprian says, "Christ made the college of bishops numerous, that if one proved heretical, or sought to devour the flock, the rest might inter-

“pose for the saving of it.” This is equally against letting the whole depend upon one universal bishop; and against throwing off the whole episcopate, that is, all the bishops in the world; which would be a total dissolution of the church as a society, by leaving no governors in it; or, which is the same, setting up governors of our own head, without any authority or succession from the apostles; which is rendering the whole precarious, and without any foundation. And it is a supposing that Providence is more obliged to stand by a church set up in direct opposition to his institution, than by that church which Christ himself has founded, and promised to be with it *to the end of the world*. And though he has permitted errors and heresies to overspread several parts of it, at several times, for the probation of the elect, like the waning of the moon, yet has he not left himself without witness, and has restored light to her, pursuant to his promise, *that the gates of hell should not prevail against her*: and this by the means of his servants and substitutes, the bishops of his church, whom he has not deserted: all of whom, through the whole world, always did, and still do maintain and own the apostolic creed. And wherein some, as the Arians, have perverted the sense of some articles, that lasted but a short time; and the truth has been more confirmed by it, in the unanimous consent and testimony of the whole episcopal college to the primitive doctrine, which they had received from the beginning. God healed these heresies in his own way, by the bishops and governors of his church, whom he had appointed, and without any infraction upon his own institution.

And it is observable, that these heresies began by infraction, which men made upon his institution of bishops; as Arius, an ambitious presbyter, first rose up against his bishop, before he was given up to that vile heresy, which he vented afterwards by degrees, to gain a party after him, thereby to maintain the opposition which he had made against his bishop: and, by a just judgment, he fell from one error to another, till he at last completed that detestable heresy which bears his name.

And in all the annals of the church, whether under the law or the gospel, there is not one instance of a schism against the priesthood which God had appointed, but great errors in doctrine and worship did follow it. Thus the priesthood, which Micah set up of his own head, and that which Jero-boam set up in opposition to that of Aaron, both ended in idolatry. Thus the Novatians and Donatists, who made schisms against their bishops, fell into grievous errors, though they did not renounce the faith.

And into what gross errors, both as to doctrine and worship, has the church of Rome fallen since her bishop set up for universality, and thereby commenced that grand schism against all the bishops of the earth, whom he sought to depress under him; but while he would thrust other churches from him, he thrust himself from the catholic church.

What hydra heresies and monstrous sects (fifty or sixty at one time, of which we have the names) flowed like a torrent into England, in the times of forty-one, after episcopacy was thrown down!

So evident is that saying, that *the church is the pillar and ground of the truth*, that we can hardly

find any error which has come into the church, but upon an infraction made upon the episcopal authority.

XIV. *An infallible demonstration of episcopacy.*

For which this is to be said, that it has all the four marks before mentioned, to ascertain any fact, in the concurrent testimony of all churches, at all times; and therefore must infallibly be the government which the apostles left upon the earth: to which we must adhere, till a greater authority than theirs shall alter it.

I doubt not but all this will determine you to the church of England: and keep you firm to episcopacy, as a matter not indifferent.

And I pray God, that *He who hath begun a good work in you may perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.* Amen.

July 17, 1704.

A
SHORT AND EASY METHOD

WITH
THE JEWS,

WHEREIN

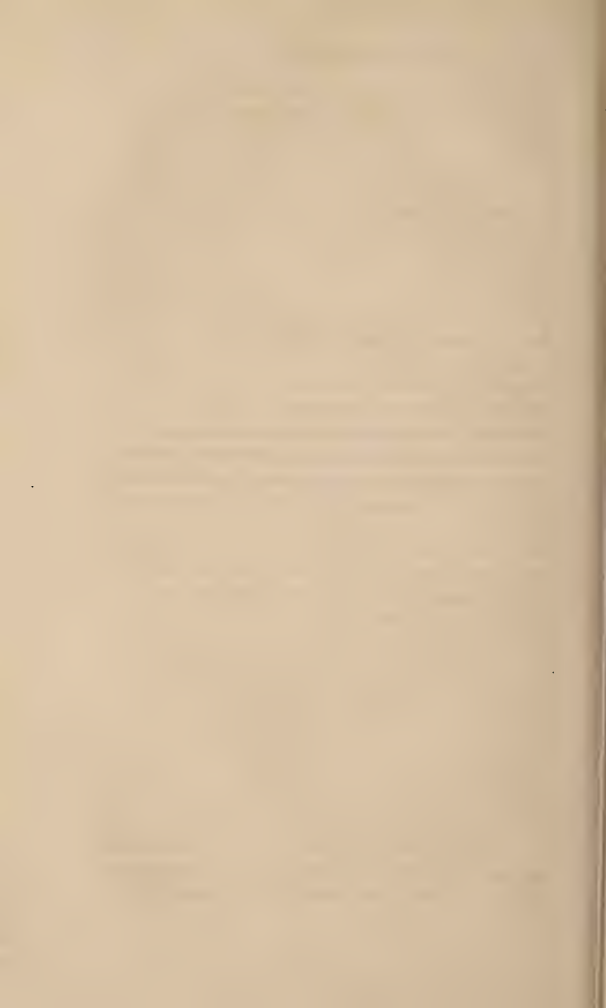
THE CERTAINTY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS
DEMONSTRATED BY INFALLIBLE PROOF FROM
THE FOUR RULES MADE USE OF
AGAINST THE DEISTS;

SHEWING,

THAT THESE FOUR RULES DO OBLIGE THE JEWS AS MUCH
OR MORE THAN THE DEISTS TO THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CHRIST.

WITH

AN ANSWER TO THE MOST MATERIAL OF THEIR OBJECTIONS AND
PREJUDICES AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.



P R E F A C E

TO THE

SHORT METHOD WITH THE JEWS.

I. I ENDEAVOURED, when I set my thoughts upon this subject, to find out the most modern objections of the Jews ; because my business is with those of the present age. I procured what I could of what they have of late published in their defence in Holland and Germany. What Grotius has wrote concerning them in his *De Verit. Rel. Christian.* is well known, because reprinted at Oxford, and translated into English. But the arguments of the Jews are rather there supposed, than told us in their own words. In the year 1644. Hackspan published R. Lipman's book *Nizachon*, and does reason with them upon their principles. Afterwards, in the year 1655, Hornbeek wrote against them. But the latest I find is Limborch, an. 1687. his *Amica Collat. cum Erudit. Judeo*, wherein the Jews' defence, arguments, and objections are set down at large in the Jews' own words. Therefore I have made most use of this book ; and have taken thence the present principles of the Jews, out of the writings of that learned Jew which are there inserted verbatim. And indeed he makes the best defence for them that, I think, their cause will bear ; and shews himself a man of letters, and of great natural wit and sagacity. Therefore I conclude that we have here the *julgulum causæ*, the heart of the cause ; and if sufficiently answered, the likeliest method to bring matters to an issue.

2. I have here forborne to enter upon the objections of the Jews, concerning the genealogies and chronological niceties which they raise against several passages of the

New Testament ; because that is done lately by a better hand. And because there are more objections of this sort, which are brought by the Deists, against the Old Testament than the New : and therefore the Jews are equally concerned herein with us, against the Deists ; and cannot make so many objections against us, upon this head, as are made against themselves.

But chiefly, because objections are no answers ; and, as hereafter shewn, there is no truth, even the existence of a God, against which objections and difficulties may not be started : and herein the Deists are concerned against the Atheists (if they be not the same) as well as Jew or Christian. It is easier to object than to answer. But if the proof be clear for the truth of any thing, we must submit to it, though we were not able to solve every difficulty. And the chasing of difficulties diverts the question, and often loses it ; and they are many times brought for that purpose. Besides making books so long and tedious, that few have the leisure or attention to go through with them.

Therefore I have chosen, for once, to put the Deists upon the defensive ; and if they cannot answer they must surrender. For it is not a nicety or objection that I insist upon ; but the merits of the cause, to which every one is obliged to answer.

And as to this, I have given them full liberty, and invited them to make all the objections that they can ; and I have made the strongest for them that I could think of. Let them make stronger.

I have had greater consideration for the Jews, (because they deserve it more,) and entered more at large upon their objections and prejudices, which has swelled the second part so much beyond the first.

3. Let me here take notice of the uncertainty of the genealogies now kept of Jewish families. They have intermarried with their proselytes of all nations, and sometimes with others : insomuch that they cannot be sure of one Jew

now in the world, who is of the pure and unmixed blood of the Jews: nay more, whether most of them be not sprung from proselytes of the heathens, Mahometans, and apostate-Christians. Therefore they can never know whether any Messiah, who shall hereafter set up, be of the tribe of Judah or family of David, according to the prophecies of the Messiah. For they have no certainty of either tribe or family now amongst them.

II. As to the Gentiles, and revealed religion.

1. What is said of the Sibyls, I would have so understood, as that I do not put the stress whether those books of the Sibyls that we have now, have received no additions or interpolations from what they were in the second century, when quoted by the Fathers: but that, as they were then, and before Christ came, they had most flagrant testimonies to our blessed Saviour, which confounded the Gentiles: and that they were not at that time corrupted, as there is no proof that they have been since.

2. Plato, in his discourse concerning prayer and the worship of God, hereafter quoted, concludes, that men by their natural reason cannot find out what sort of worship will be acceptable to God; nor can be sure what they ought to pray for according to his will: and that it were safer to forbear sacrifices and prayer, than to venture upon it, when we did not know but that we might provoke God thereby, instead of pleasing him. That therefore it was necessary they should wait till God should send some person from heaven to instruct them in this; and that they did expect such a person to be sent; and they greatly longed to see that time, and that man, whom they believed should come. They saw his day, and rejoiced as Abraham did; but not Johu viii. so clearly, not having so full and express revelation of him ^{56.} as Abraham had. But from revelation they had it, (and not merely from the strength of their reason,) though perhaps they knew it not: for they declared that they had it by tradition from their fathers, and in all probability it had

descended through all Adam's posterity from the first promise of it, Gen. iii. 15. together with the institution of sacrifices; which were ordained, not only as constant remembrances of it, but as visible types of the fulfilling of it; though the original and full import of the one, as well as the other, had been lost among the heathen. This is brought to shew the expectation that the Gentiles had of a Messiah to come.

But here I would, from this reasoning of Plato's, infer the necessity of revealed religion against the Deists. Here they see that the wisest of the philosophers did own that they were wholly at a loss and uncertainty without it.

And withal, it shews that the wisest of the heathens did not believe the pretended revelations of their gods. And therefore there can lie no comparison betwixt these, and the faith which is most surely believed by the Christians; upon what grounds, is shewn hereafter; and that they are infallible.

A
SHORT AND EASY METHOD
WITH
THE JEWS.

BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. The first part of this discourse was wrote against the Deists, equal enemies to you and us, who deny all instituted and revealed religion: and I have justified the truth of yours, while I have asserted that of the Christian religion; they both stand upon one bottom: they only, of all the revelations that ever were pretended in the world, can shew the four marks before mentioned; which do infallibly demonstrate the truth of any matter of fact where they all do meet: and the consequence is as plain, that if the revelation of Moses be true, that of Christ must be true also: and you can never demonstrate the truth of the matters of fact of Moses by any arguments or evidences which will not as strongly evince the truth of the matters of fact of Christ: and, on the other hand, you cannot overthrow the matters of fact of Christ, but you must by the same means destroy those of Moses: so that I hope you are involved under the happy necessity either to renounce Moses or to embrace Christ.

But if you will allow (as some of you have done) that the matters of fact of our Lord Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, are true; but will contend that this

does not infer the truth of his doctrine, because, as may be alleged, those seeming miracles which he wrought were done by magic: then, I beseech you, how will you rescue the miracles of Moses from the same objection? The comparison in this case must lie betwixt the miracles of Moses and of Christ; and I believe you will not deny but that those recorded in the Gospel are full as great as those in Exodus.

II. If the Deists think to come in here betwixt us, and conclude both to be false miracles, at least that we cannot be sure they are true miracles, because, as they philosophize, we do not know the utmost extent of the power of nature, and consequently cannot know what exceeds it.

Answ. 1. This is an objection, not against the miracles recorded of Moses or of Christ, but against all miracles; and putting it out of God's power to shew any miracle that ought to be believed of man: which is a contradiction to the principles of the Deists themselves, who allow an eternal Being of infinite power; and yet by this would put it out of his power to make any external revelation to men.

2. But, in the next place, their philosophy is not good; for though we could not know the utmost stretch of what nature can do, yet it will not follow that we cannot know what is contrary to nature in those works of nature which we do know: for example, though I cannot tell all the whole nature of fire, and all its operations, yet this I certainly know, that it is of the nature of fire to burn: and therefore if proper fuel be administered unto it, it is contrary to the nature of fire not to consume it. Thus when Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, were thrown

into the burning fiery furnace, if that matter of fact be true in all its circumstances, as it is related in the third chapter of Daniel, we can be sure that there was a stop then put to the natural power of the fire ; which is a miracle. We can be as sure of it as of any thing we either see or hear : so that the same scepticism which these men advance against miracles, will as much take away the certainty of our outward senses ; which is the only *postulatum* they would have taken as undoubted, and to which they reduce all the certainty of which mankind is capable ; giving to themselves, by their great sense, little preeminence above the condition of brutes ; to which they would degrade all the rest of the world with themselves : and some of them have shewn their parts in witty satires upon this subject ; but let us leave them, with the company they have chosen, and return.

As sure as we can be that it is the nature of fire to burn, (though we may not know every thing else it can do,) so sure we can be that it exceeds the power of nature to raise the dead by the speaking of a word, to cure the lame, blind, &c. by the same means, or the touch of one's finger, without any other application.

III. Now then the miracles recorded of Christ being as great as those recorded of Moses, and carrying along with them the same evidences of their truth, deduced down from that time to this, what reason can be given for the believing of the one, and yet rejecting of the other ? There can be none, my friends, only there are some prejudices under which you labour, that stop your way towards receiving of the truth, which you cannot deny ; as

conceiving it inconsistent with your interpretation of some texts in your law.

But ought you not rather to suspect your own interpretations, (especially where the words will favourably bear another,) than to reject such an evidence as must undermine your law itself, and destroy its infallible certainty, by disowning the same, in the only case that carries the same demonstration along with it? God cannot contradict himself; and therefore would never have set his own seal (which it is not possible to counterfeit, as before is shewn) to the truth of the gospel, if it did, in the least iota, contradict or destroy the law: therefore it behoves you well to consider whether those things that you take for contradictions are such. In order to which,

1. Consider the difference betwixt destroying and fulfilling. The fulfilling of a prophecy is not its destruction, but completion: so of all types or shadows which point at things to come, when the substance is come, the shadow ceases of course.

Now if the Messiah was prophesied of, and typified in the law, then his coming will indeed put an end to these, but not by way of destroying, which would be contradicting, but of fulfilling them, which is confirming and attesting to the truth of them.

And I suppose you are not ignorant that our Mes-

Matt. v. 17, siah did not pretend to *destroy the law, but to fulfil*
 18, 19. *it*: and did most strongly assert and confirm it to
 Luke xvi. 17. the least iota: and did fulfil it in every circumstance,

Heb. xiii. 12. even to his suffering *without the gate*, to answer the
 Lev. xvi. 27. burning of the body of the expiatory sacrifice *with-*
 Luke xxiv. 44. *out the camp, &c.* That, as himself said, *all things*
might be fulfilled which were written in the Law of
Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms,

concerning him: some of which are repeated hereafter, sect. XII.

2. But I will carry this argument further. That not only there is no contradiction to the law in the gospel, but that the law cannot be true unless you allow the truth of the gospel: for no other way possible is there to reconcile the promises made in the law, but as they are fulfilled in the gospel, of which let me give some few instances out of many.

(1.) *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people, or nations, be.* Gen. xlix.
10.

This the Chaldee and ancient Jewish interpreters do understand of the Messiah.

And the sceptre being long since departed from Judah, and no other Messiah come but our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom the gathering of the nations, or Gentiles, has been; the rabbies of the Jews, since his coming, have strained their wits to invent salvoes and evasions for this prophecy. Some of them say, that by Shiloh here was not meant the Messiah, but Moses; others say, it was the tabernacle at Shiloh; but others, thinking these interpretations not tenable, and that it cannot be denied to be meant of the Messiah, have fenced about the word sceptre, which they contend to be a rod, not of rule, but of correction, which should not depart from Judah till Shiloh, or the Messiah, should come: others, not liking this, allow it to be a sceptre of government; but then turn it this way, viz. that the sceptre should not finally, or for ever, depart from Judah, because the Messiah should come, that is, to restore it: but this being an altering instead of expounding the text,

others seeing there could not be any tolerable evasion made from the words of the text, have boldly adventured upon a new way of satisfying it, viz. that the sceptre, or dominion, is not yet departed, that is, not totally, for that some of them have, somewhere or other, some share or other of government or jurisdiction, more or less; at least, some that have one way or other descended from the tribe of Judah, though it may not be known.

I will not take up time to examine or disprove these pretences; they carry guilt in their face: and being all contradictory to one another, shew to what a confusion the Jews are brought, in forcing their way through the plain predictions of the Messiah; of which I will go on to more instances.

Jer. xxxiii.
17, 18, 20,
21.

(2.) *Thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually—Thus saith the Lord; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.* Now is all this gloriously fulfilled in our Messiah, the Son of David, who is made Lord of heaven and earth, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end. But without this, how is this prophecy fulfilled? What son of David can you produce who now reigns over the house of Israel? And as for the covenant with Levi, that is as much broken; for instead of sacrifices continually, you

have not now, nor have had since the destruction of Jerusalem, above 1600 years, any sacrifice at all. But if you understand these prophecies, as of the kingdom of the Messiah, so of his priesthood, of which that of Levi was a type, and fulfilled in it, then is this prophecy exactly accomplished in the evangelical priesthood, which our Messiah has instituted: and which, we doubt not, will, according to the utmost extent of this prophecy of it, last as long as the covenant of day and night, that is, as our Messiah has again given us his assurance, *even* Mat. xxviii. 20. xvi. 18. *unto the end of the world*; and that *the gates of hell* shall never be able to *prevail against it*. Some of the ^bJews pretend that David will be raised from the dead, and made immortal, to fulfil this prophecy: but others, rejecting this interpretation, say, that this is to be meant of the time after the Messiah, viz. That after the Messiah shall come, of the seed of David, there shall no more want of his seed to rule, &c. But the words of the text are, *that David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel*: and putting to this, *after the coming of the Messiah*, is adding to the text. And the like liberty would leave nothing certain in any text of the Bible, or in any other writing. The next I produce is,

(3.) That most exact description of the death and Isaiah liii. sufferings of the Messiah, with the reason of it, viz. as an expiation and satisfaction for the sins of the people.

And how forced and foreign is that interpretation which some of your modern Jews have put upon

^b Limborch, Collat. p. 73.

this chapter, on purpose to avoid the plain proof of our Messiah therein? As if the person there spoke of were not any particular person, but only a description of the people of the Jews, in the name of a person; of their present dispersion through all nations, with the contempt and misery which they suffer; and withal their making many proselytes to their religion, in this their dispersion.

For their many proselytes, we hear not of them. If the Jews keep their own ground, it is the most that in your present circumstances you seem to expect; and would be well content to compound for it, not only here, but in all the countries whither you are dispersed. What king, what nation, have you converted? Nay, in our part of the world, what family? what persons? And we hear as little of it from other parts. You boast of many in Spain and Portugal; but they conceal it, and we know them not: but the flowing in of the Gentiles has been to the Christian church, and only so can the promise of it to your church be verified, that is, as yours was a type of ours; or as ours is truly yours, fulfilled and continued, in the reign of your Messiah, pursuant to all the prophecies which went before of him. Therefore by all that has yet appeared of your dispersion, it is as a just punishment for your own sins; and not for the conversion of the Gentiles. But how for their conversion? When your learned Jew confesses (as hereafter quoted) that you have no arguments against the Gentiles, nor can convince any of them. And in all the prophecies of this your dispersion (some of which are recited sect. XI.) there is nothing told of the conversion of the Gentiles as thereby designed, but only as a

punishment of your iniquity ; and, at the length, for your conversion, as well as that of the Gentiles. As that God will have mercy upon you, and cause your captivity to return : that the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and turn away iniquity from Jacob ; and, in the mean time, that you should be rejected for your wickedness, and another people chosen in your place. For thus it is said to you, *But ye are they that forsake the Lord—Therefore will I number you to the sword—Because when I called, ye did not answer ; when I spake, ye did not hear—*(ye did not hearken to the words of the Lord, in the mouth of that prophet, whom he told you he would send) *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.* How literally is this fulfilled ! God hath chosen the Christians in your place, and called his servants by another name : not that you should be finally rejected ; but till the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in : and then shall you be converted by them, and not they by you. Therefore are you fatally deluded who attribute to yourselves, and to your present circumstances, all that righteousness which is spoken of the Messiah in the fifty-third of Isaiah. As, *by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, &c.* Was it for this end that God foretold your dispersion ? No, but for

Jer. xxxiii.

26.

Isaiah lix.

20.

Isaiah lxx.

11—15.

your grievous iniquities, and for your own conversion. As said by a prophet of your own, *Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries. And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations—because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me—and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. And they shall know that I am the Lord, and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them.* Again, *They shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries. But I will leave a few men of them—that they may declare all their abominations among the heathen whither they come; and they shall know that I am the Lord; that is, You Jews shall know it is to convince and convert you that you shall be so dispersed, as you are this day.* Again, *Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord.—Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.*

Ezek. vi. 8,
9, 10

Chap. xii.
15, 16.

Amos ix. 7,
8, 9.

You shall be preserved, in your dispersion, in order to your repentance, not for your holiness to convert the nations, for you are called the *sinful kingdom*, and as *children of the Ethiopians*. And God will choose other hands to raise his kingdom

among the heathen; as it follows, *In that day will* ver. 11.

I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen—that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this. See that fulfilled this day.

Where are the heathen that are called by the name of the Lord? Who does possess them, but our Messiah, the Son of David, by whose name they are called Christians? In vain therefore do you expect the heathen to be converted by you. You see it done already by those whom God has chosen in your room; and who now seek to convert you, by persuading of you to hearken to Moses and your own prophets; who have told you of this conversion of the Gentiles, while you remain in your obstinacy: *I* Isaiah lxxv.
am sought of them that asked not for me; I am ^{1, 2.}
found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. But unto Israel he saith, I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people. Yet you would attribute great holiness to yourselves in this your dispersion, even all that which is spoken of the Messiah in the fifty-third of Isaiah.

I have insisted thus long upon it, because this is all you have to say against that wonderful prophecy of the low outward appearance of the Messiah, when he should come; and of the end of his coming; not fighting, (as you expect,) but suffering; not conquering men with the sword, but as it is there expressed, (ver. 10.) *giving up his soul an offering for sin*; whereby to redeem us from that death denounced Gen. ii. 17.
 against sin; and so conquering him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; to whom we

were in bondage, lying under the curse, of which he was made the executioner.

And this (till the time should come) was shadowed out to us in several types and representations of it, not only in your law, which was but one of them; for sacrifices, the most express type of the death and sacrifice of the Messiah, were instituted

Gen. iii. 15. upon the first sin of man, and the promise of the Messiah then given, and his conquest of the serpent; and were practised by Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, &c. before the law. But most lively expressed in the sacrifice of Isaac; upon which the promise of the

Gen. xxii. 18. Messiah was again renewed to Abraham. This salvation by the Messiah was likewise prefigured by the saving of Noah and his family in the ark; as by your passage through the Red sea, and deliverance out of Egypt; particularly by the erection of the brasen serpent, as of Christ upon the cross; and your salvation only by looking upon that, as ours by faith in him. But these types may be overvalued, when we rest in them, without looking forward to what they represent. Therefore Hezekiah

2 Kings xviii. 4. broke that brasen serpent to pieces, and called it Nehushtan, a contemptible name, that is, only a bit of brass. And God expresses himself with as much indignation against your sacrifices, as insufficient of themselves to reconcile to him. In which sense, he

Isai. i. 11
—15. declares that he hates them, that they are a trouble and an abomination to him, and that he is weary to bear them: and that he will not accept of them, or has required them, as a satisfaction for sin. What

Ps. xi. 6, 7. is it then that he will accept? Even the Messiah, for whom a body was prepared, in which he was to make that atonement which the bodies of beasts

could not: and which is very particularly described in the fifty-third of Isaiah; and cannot be applied to the Jewish nation (as they would now turn it) under their present sufferings and calamity: it is said, *he* ver. 12. *bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.* Do the Jews make intercession for the Gentiles? Or how do they bear their sins? It is said, *he had done no violence, neither was any de-* ver. 9. *ceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, &c.* But what is before recited out of your prophets, and much more could be added to the same purpose, shew plainly, that you have been bruised for your own great wickednesses. And the opinion of your own righteousness is not the least part of your delusion. But you oppose yourselves, and set up contrary pretences: for when you come to give an account why your Messiah has delayed his coming so long beyond the time which was limited by the prophets, you have no other answer, but that it is because of your sins: and they must be sins more than ordinary which have provoked God to break his promises, so oft repeated, concerning the time of the Messiah's coming: so that here you make yourselves the greatest sinners that can be: but in answer to Isaiah liii. then you are righteous altogether, and there is no deceit in your mouth! your nation is the *righteous servant* of the Lord there spoken of!

But of that servant it is said, *ver. 8. for the transgression of my people was he stricken:* therefore he was not that people, but he suffered for that people.

The learned Jew says^b, that the death which the

Christians would infer of the Messiah from this of Isaiah liii. means not a real death, (for they suppose rightly, but misunderstood, that their Messiah will live for ever,) but only *labores et flagella*, (as he words it,) great labours and afflictions, which they suppose he may endure, *ante perfectum regni revelationem*, before the full establishment of his kingdom: and he brings as a parallel place, *in deaths oft*, which the apostle speaks of himself, but it means no more than dangers.

2 Cor. xi.
23.

Answ. 1. The Messiah's undergoing stripes and afflictions, though in order to his kingdom, is as adverse to the Jews' notion of the Messiah as death itself; for they suppose him to go on gloriously in conquests and victory, and not to be scourged or ignominiously treated.

Answ. 2. Being in deaths, shews itself to be a figurative expression; for a man can be in death but once, therefore not, in that sense, often in deaths: but as a man in battles, or storms at sea, may be said to be often in deaths, so the apostle in the many dangers which he there repeats. But far otherwise are the expressions concerning the death of the Messiah, *He was cut off out of the land of the living: he made his grave with the wicked: he poured out his soul unto death. And, Messiah the Prince shall be cut off, but not for himself, &c.* If these expressions do not signify death, what others can? And the Jews struggling against it shews only that they are resolved not to be convinced by any words whatsoever that can be spoken. They try all ways, but dare stick to none; for they are contradictory to one another: and if one of their excuses hold, the rest must be false: which confusion of

Isa. liii. 8,
9. 12.

Dan. ix. 25,
26.

itself were enough to convince them. You shall see more of them.

To avoid this and other prophecies which speak expressly of the poor and low state in which the Messiah was to appear, *Behold thy King cometh* Zech. ix. 9. *unto thee poor*, or, as we translate it, *lowly*, &c. the modern Jews have framed to themselves two Messiahs, one, Ben Joseph, of the tribe of Ephraim, who was to be poor and contemptible, and undergo great indignities; the other, Ben David, of the tribe of Judah, who was to be victorious, and conquer all the earth before them, and to live for ever in temporal grandeur: that he was to raise again from the dead all the Israelites of former ages, and among them the first Messiah, Ben Joseph. Thus the Jews, shutting fast their eyes, do dream and invent Messiahs on purpose, because they will not be concluded by the plain prophecies of the one and only Messiah. Where do the prophets speak of two Messiahs? But speaking all along of one, and of the Son or Messiah, does necessarily exclude any other. If there were two, one could not be the Messiah: and by the same rule they make two, they may make two score of Messiahs. But this shameless contrivance shews how hard they are put to it, to elude the plain prophecies of the Messiah; and is a confirmation of the true import and meaning of these prophecies, which are not answerable but by such poor and guilty shifts. It is for this reason that I have been so long upon this prophecy of Isaiah, and shewn the dream of your modern rabbies of two Messiahs, unknown to all your expositors before Christ came, but invented since, on purpose to avoid

the plain and undoubted characters which our Jesus bore of the Messiah.

Dan. ix. 24,
&c. 4. The famous prophecy of Daniel's seventy weeks, which, according to the prophetical computation of a year for a day, makes four hundred and ninety years; in which time it was then foretold that the Messiah should come; and our Messiah did come within that time: and all there spoken of him were punctually fulfilled; as, that the Messiah should be cut off, and soon after, that the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary should be destroyed, and the sacrifice and oblation should cease. And that even after all this, desolations were determined against your nation.

And the end of the Messiah's coming is likewise there told, not temporal conquests, as you dream of, but *to finish the transgressions, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.*

Ezek. xiv.
14, 20.

This prophecy pinches so close, that the modern Jews, to avoid it, would endeavour to discredit the whole book of Daniel: they dare not quite throw it off, because it was indubitably received by their forefathers before Christ came: and the high rank in which Daniel is put rather gives him the preference before all the rest of the prophets, than excludes him out of their number: it makes him at least the most highly favoured of God of all the men living in the world in his time: and his visions of the four great empires of the world, and prophecies of the state-revolutions which followed so remarkably, made his prophecies more noted than those of any of the other prophets: and God sets him forth as the standard of wisdom amongst men: for these reasons

Ezek.
xxviii. 3.

the Jews after Christ could not expunge this book of Daniel. But about a hundred years after Christ they quite inverted the method of the books of the Old Testament, which to that time had been received amongst them, and made a new distribution of them, and a distinction of those they called *ἁγίο-γραφα*, or *holy writings*, but put them in a class below the inspired and canonical scriptures: and into this lower class they thrust the book of Daniel at the end of the prophets, which before was placed in the middle of them.

But this book of Daniel, if it be not among those which are inspired in the highest degree, it cannot stand among any holy or good writings, but it must be reckoned false and blasphemous; because it speaks of itself all along as immediately inspired by God: and if those visions and revelations there related be not true, then it is telling of lies in the name of the Lord; which is high blasphemy.

Therefore since the modern Jews dare not place the book of Daniel lower than among the holy or pious writings, they confess it to be inspired and canonical; and have only discovered their own guilt in seeking to avoid the witness of their own prophets to our Messiah.

5. That promise concerning the temple of Solo-^{2 Chron. vii. 16.} mon, that God's name should be there for ever, and perpetually, cannot be verified but as it was a type of the Christian church, which shall last for ever: for types, as pictures, are often called by the name of what they represent; and by them is meant that whereof they are the types.

6. As that promise to the temple of Solomon, so neither can that made to the second temple be

otherwise verified than as fulfilled in our Messiah; that *the glory of this latter house should be greater than of the former*: and yet it was as nothing in comparison of the former. How then should the glory be greater? It is told, because the desire of all nations should come into it, and *in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts*. Here was given the eternal peace and reconciliation of God with men, in the person of Jesus Christ, in whom God, by his means, reconciled the world unto himself.

Some Jews, to avoid the force of this prophecy, do now pretend, that by *the latter house* is not to be meant that second temple, but some other yet to be built. This is very precarious, and a guilty plea; but it will not bear: for it is plain that it was of that very second temple which the prophet spoke. The comparison is betwixt that temple which they then saw, and the first temple of Solomon. And God speaking of that temple then built, says, *I will fill this house with glory*; and, *the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former*. If it were spoken of a third or a fourth temple, the word *former* would not relate to the first temple; and there was no other *former*, when this prophecy was given forth. It was the second temple that seemed as nothing in the eyes of those who had seen the first, who therefore wept: and to comfort these it was here promised, that the glory of that second house should exceed that of the former.

But there were other glories, much greater than that of the building, which the first temple had; and the second had none of them. As your own rabbies^c

^c R. Kimchi and R. Solom. in Hag. i. 8. and R. Bechai in Le-gem, f. 59.

do reckon them under five heads. 1. The holy ark, wherein were the tables of the covenant, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded; and where God was said to dwell between the cherubims that covered it. 2. The schechina, or divine presence, in the cloud of glory. 3. The miraculous Urim and Thummim. 4. The holy fire that came down from heaven. 5. The gift of prophecy, or of the Holy Ghost. These all ceased under the second temple: which made its glory much more inferior to that of the first, than the difference as to the magnificence of the building. But all these glories were much exceeded under the second temple; they were fulfilled, and more divinely exhibited, in their Archetype, the Messiah; who was the true schechina, God not only appearing in, but personally united to our nature. Whose holy Spirit descended miraculously in fire upon his apostles, the same day (of Pentecost) wherein the law was given in fire from mount Sinai; and filled them with the gifts of tongues, of miracles, and of prophecy, which were now departed from the temple; and placed that infallible Urim and Thummim in their hearts, which was but faintly represented in the breastplate of your high priest.

7. Again, of this second temple it was said, *The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the angel of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.* Therefore it was necessary that the Messiah should come during the standing of the second temple. And that prophecy can never now be fulfilled.

You have several times attempted to rebuild your

temple, in the reigns of Adrian, of Constantine, of Julian, when having gained not only that apostate emperor's consent, but that he was willing to bear the expenses of it; and gave orders for the rebuilding of your temple at Jerusalem, in odium to the Christians; and the heathens did with great zeal (for the same reason) assist you in it. Even then, when you seemed on all hands to have gained your purpose—behold God did immediately himself interpose! and by a terrible earthquake threw up the stones out of the very foundation with that violence, as destroyed many of the workmen and spectators; and by overthrowing the buildings near adjoining to the temple, killed and maimed many more of the Jews, who were there gathered together for the carrying on of this work.

And when, not terrified with this, they again attempted to lay the foundations of the temple, globes of fire, bursting out of the very foundations, not only destroyed the workmen, but devoured the stones. This is recorded in Socrat. Hist. Eccl. l. III. c. 20. and in Sozom. l. V. c. 22. who appeals to several witnesses of it then living: and our Chrysostom says, “We are all witnesses of this “thing^d.” But besides these testimonies of Christians, this is likewise told by Ammianus Marcellinus, who was not a Christian, in his 23rd book. Thus the building of the temple was defeated at that time A. C. 361. and to this day. Though if you had a new temple to-morrow, that could not solve the prophecies that were made either to the first or second temple; which last has been destroyed now more than 1600 years; much less

^d Orat. 2. contr. Jud.

could it satisfy all those prophecies that speak so particularly of the time of the Messiah's coming, which are longer since past.

IV. The prophecies of the holy scriptures concerning the time of the coming of the Messiah, were so noted and known among the Jews, that when it drew near, viz. about the time that our blessed Saviour came into the world, the Jews were generally looking out for him, and expected his coming. Some thought that Herod (who repaired the temple, and made it more glorious) was he, and took the name of Herodians; others followed Theudas; others Judas of Galilee.

Both of which are mentioned in our History of ^{Acts v. 36,} the Acts of the Apostles; and likewise by your Joseph^e: if it was not another Theudas, who, as he tells, pretended to miracles, viz. to divide the river Jordan by his command, and give his followers passage through it on dry land. He mentions another impostor^f who led the Jews into the wilderness, and promised them deliverance, if they would follow him thither: whom Festus destroyed with all his followers. This our Saviour literally foretold; and ^{Matt. xxiii.} cautions against following these false Christs and ^{23—26.} false prophets into the desert. And Josephus says^g, that there were at that time (which was about fifty-seven or fifty-eight years after the nativity of Christ) many enchanters and deceivers, who persuaded the common people to follow them into the desert, where they promised to work miracles, &c. He says, that the country of Judæa was stored with such: so intent were they then to find out their Messiah, and

^e Joseph. Antiq. l. xxviii. c. 1, 2. l. xx. c. 2.

^f Ibid. c. 7.

^g Ibid. c. 6.

so persuaded that that was the time of his coming. The two brothers, Asinæus and Anilæus^h, both weavers, had mighty successes; but were at last destroyed, and were the occasion of the destruction of many of the Jews, who followed them about forty years after the birth of Christ. And about seventy-four years after, another weaver, one Jonathanⁱ, led many of the Jews after him into the wilderness, where he promised to shew them signs and wonders. He was burnt alive, and multitudes of the Jews were massacred about Cyrene. This was two years after the destruction of Jerusalem. And Josephus tells, that the great cause of that was their expectation of their Messiah then to come. For he says^k, that “the chief thing which incited them to “that war,” with the Romans, “was a doubtful prophecy,” as he calls it, “found in the holy scriptures, “that, about that time, one of their country should “be monarch of the whole world.” He said (after the destruction of Jerusalem) that they were deceived in this interpretation of the prophecy; which he (then) applied to the reign of Vespasian, as if fulfilled in him.

V. But what is more remarkable, the Romans themselves had the same notion current among them: and not only they, but all the eastern part of the world, which may well include all that was then known. Thus says Suetonius, in the Life of Vespasian, *Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus et constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut eo tempore, Judæa profecti rerum potirentur*: i. e. that “an ancient and constant tradition had obtained throughout all the

^h Joseph. Antiq. l. xviii. c. 12. ⁱ Id. de Bell. Jud. l. vii. c. 31.

^k Bell. Jud. l. vii. c. 12.

“ East, that in the Fates it was decreed, that about
“ that time some who should come from Judæa
“ should obtain the dominion, or government,” i. e.
of the world, which the Romans then possessed.
And Corn. Tacit. (Hist. l. V.) speaks almost in the
same words; telling of the great prodigies which
preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, he says, that
many understood them as the forerunners of that
extraordinary Person, whom the ancient books of
the priests did foretell should come about that time
from Judæa, and obtain the dominion. *Pluribus
persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis conti-
neri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret oriens, pro-
fectique Judæa rerum potirentur.*

These ancient books of the priests must either
mean the holy scriptures of the Old Testament in
the hands of the Jewish priests, and which were
known to the Romans; (and, if so, it shews the
sense of the Jews at that time, and before, that that
was the time of the Messiah's coming;) or other-
wise, which is more probable, by these books were
meant the oracles of the sibyls, which were kept
with great veneration by the Roman priests; and
which very plainly foretold the coming of Christ,
and pointed out the very time. And this raised so
great an expectation, and a jealousy in the Roman
government at that time, with a watchful eye parti-
cularly upon the Jews. The same year that Pom-
pey took Jerusalem, one of the sibyl oracles made a
great noise, viz. that “ Nature was about to bring
“ forth a King to the Romans.” Which, as Sueto-
nius tells in the Life of Augustus, did so terrify the
senate, that they made a decree, that “ none born
“ that year should be educated: and that those

“ whose wives were with child did each conceive
 “ great hopes, applying the prophecy to them-
 “ selves.”——*Senatum exterritum censuisse, ne quis*
illo anno genitus educaretur; eos qui gravidas
uxores haberent, quod ad se quisque spem traheret,
curasse ne senatusconsultum ad ærarium deferre-
tur. And Appian, Plutarch, Sallust, and Cicero, do
 all say that it was this prophecy of the sibyls
 which stirred up Cornel. Lentulus at that time, he
 hoping that he was the man who should be king of
 the Romans. Some applied it to Cæsar, which
 Cicero, (de Divinatione,) after Cæsar's death, ridi-
 cules, and cautions that those prophecies should not
 be interpreted of any future king to be in Rome.
Cum antistitibus agamus, et quidvis potius ex illis li-
bris quam regem proferant: quem Romæ post hæc
nec dii nec homines esse patientur. Virgil, in his
 famous fourth Eclogue, wrote about the beginning
 of Herod the Great, compliments the consul Pollio
 with this prophecy, by supposing it might refer to
 his son Saloninus, then born. But the words are
 too great to be verified of any mere mortal man;
 and speak of such a golden age and renovation of all
 things, as cannot be fulfilled in the reign of any
 earthly king. And Virgil does express it almost in the
 words of the holy scriptures, wherein they tell of the
 glorious age of the Messiah; of *new heavens and a*
new earth, then to begin, and to be finally completed
 at the end of the world. Isa. lxxv. 17. 2 Pet. iii. 13.

Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas:
Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.
Jam nova progenies cælo demittitur alto.
Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
Desinet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo——

Now the last age decreed by Fate is come ;
 And a new frame of all things does begin :
 An holy progeny from heaven descends.
 Auspicious be his birth, which puts an end
 To the iron age, and from whence shall rise
 A golden state far glorious through the earth.

Then the poet runs a division upon the peaceable state of that reign, perfectly a paraphrase of Isaiah lxxv. from ver. 17. which ends ver. 25 : *The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw as the bullock : and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.*

—*Nec magnos metuent armenta leones.
 Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni
 Occidet—*

—Nor shall the flocks fierce lions fear.
 No serpent shall be there, or herb of pois'nous juice.

Nay, the very atonement for our sins, which Daniel attributed to the Messiah, chap. ix. 24. *To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity*, is thus expressed in this Eclogue:

*Tc duce, si qua manent, sceleris vestigia nostri
 Irrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.*

By thee, what footsteps of our sins remain
 Are blotted out, and the whole world set free
 From her perpetual bondage, and her fear.

And the very words of Haggai ii. 6. seem to be literally translated by Virgil. Thus says the prophet of the coming of the Messiah, *Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will*

shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come : and thus the poet,

*Aggredere O magnos (aderit jam tempus) honores,
Chara Deum soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum !
Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,
Terrasque, tractusque maris, cælumque profundum :
Aspice, venturo lætentur ut omnia seculo.*

Enter on thy high honour, now's the time,
Offspring of God, O thou great gift of Jove !
Behold, the world, heav'n, earth, and seas do shake :
Behold how all rejoice to greet that glorious age !

And, as if Virgil had been learned in the doctrine of Christ, he tells, that these glorious times should not begin immediately upon the birth of that wonderful Person then expected to come into the world; but that wickedness should still keep its ground in several places.

*Pauca tamen suberunt priscæ vestigia fraudis.
——Erunt etiam altera bella.*

But yet some few remains shall still be left
Of ancient fraud, and wars shall still go on.

Now how Virgil applied all this is not the matter, whether in part to Augustus, or partly to Pollio, and partly to Saloninus his son, then newly born; but it shews the general expectation that there was at that time of the birth of a most extraordinary person who should introduce a new and golden age, and both reform and govern the whole world; justly therefore called by the prophet *the desire of all nations*.

Now the sibyls had pointed out the time to be then at hand: and if it should be supposed (though there is no reason for it) that the Jews had forged or interpolated these oracles, and made them speak

thus in the language of the holy scriptures, yet this still shews that the Jews at that time did so understand the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messias, as that then was the time prefixed for his coming.

But if these prophecies of the sibyls be what they speak themselves, (against which nothing but presumption has yet appeared,) then can they not be denied as a demonstrative proof of our Jesus being the Messiah; for they describe him so personally and so plainly, that this is made the cause of suspicion against them; as if they could not be genuine, because they speak so very plainly and particularly of Jesus Christ.

This has carried some Christian critics too far, to reject upon this only presumption the authority of the sibyls. And yet they have not (not any of them that I can find) taken into due consideration the answer which Origen gives to this same objection of theirs, for it is not a new one. It was first objected by the heathens: Celsus had recourse to this, alleging, that the Christians had interpolated and added several things to the prophecies of the sibyls: but Origen¹ appeals to the ancient copies of them, and challenges Celsus, or any of the heathens, to shew what was added; which, he says, they could not instance, and that certainly they would if they could. Yet some of our critics have declared themselves, in this, for Celsus against Origen, but without answer-

¹ Ἀποφηνάμενος, ὅτι παρενεγράψαμεν εἰς τὰ ἐκείνης πολλά καὶ βλάσφημα· καὶ μὴ ἀποδείξας μὴδ' ὅτι παρενεγράψαμεν· ἀπέδειξε δ' ἄν, εἰ τὰ ἀρχαιότερα καθαρώτερα εἰδείκνυε, καὶ οὐκ ἔχοντα ἅπερ οἶεται παρεγγεγράφθαι· μὴ ἀποδείξας δὲ μὴδ' ὅτι βλάσφημά ἐστι ταῦτα. Origen contra Cels. l. vii. p. 369.

ing of Origen's argument, which Celsus could not : and it is not to be imagined that Origen would have put the issue upon such a plain matter of fact, if it had not been true, and which could have been so easily disproved.

But this especially is to be considered, that the primitive Fathers of the church, as Justin, Clemens, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Origen, Eusebius, Lactantius, &c. did lay so great a stress upon the sibyls, and quoted them so often against the heathens, that they called the Christians *sibyllianists*. Clemens Alexandrinus in his *Stromat.* l. VI. quotes St. Paul (some work of his now lost) in his disputations with the Gentiles, referring them to their own sibyls : and he lived near to the time of St. Paul ; so that we must suppose this to have been at least the current opinion of that early age of St. Clement. This is observed *obiter*, for the sake of some Christian critics, who seem not to have a due regard for the authority of the primitive Fathers of the church.

But as to what concerns you Jews, and the present subject we are upon, there can be no dispute, by what is quoted out of the sibyls by several authors before Christ came, that they spoke of a wonderful person to appear in the world, who should rule all nations : and that it was understood as well by the then Jews as Romans to be about that time in which our Jesus was born. Now there could be none but Jews or heathens to have made these prophecies of the sibyls : (there being no Christians then in the world :) and, as said before, it is all one, as to our present argument, whether the one or the other made them ; for I bring them now only to shew that there was a general expectation of the

Messiah at that time when our Jesus was born: and I have shewn that it was universal all the world over, the greatest part of which was then under the Roman government; who likewise testify that all the eastern part of the world had the same expectation.

And that not only at that time, as if then put into their heads, (by the craft or artifice of the Jews, as some fanciful men have pleased themselves to imagine,) but that they had it all along as an ancient and undoubted tradition, written in the books of fate; and that it should come to pass at that very time: and never but at that time was there any such general expectation.

This universal impulse (if we will call it no more) which was imprinted, in whatever manner, upon the minds of the whole earth, to expect a glorious and wonderful Deliverer, Restorer, and King of the world, at that time when our blessed Lord and Saviour was born, (and never before or since,) cannot be made of less account than a very extraordinary and even divine apparatus, or preparing of the way, whereby to introduce the Son of God with the general expectation and commotion of all nature into the world.

And, among all these, the expectation was most firm, as there was most reason, with you the Jews, who had the lively oracles of the holy scriptures; which punctually pointed out the time wherein God had decreed to send his great Messiah into the world.

This appears with a flagrant evidence, in your setting up at that time this and that person for the Messiah, (as I have before shewn out of Jo-

sephus,) and so continued to the destruction of Jerusalem.

And since that time you have not desisted looking out for your Messiah, and following every impostor that with any or no pretence set himself up for it: as our Lord, your true Messiah, has foretold to you, that many would come in his name, saying,

Matt. xxiv.
25.

I am Christ: Behold, says he, *I have told you before*; but you would not believe, and it has turned to your destruction.

VI. The history of these false Messiahs has been lately wrote by Johannes a Lent, and printed at Herborn, 1697. with sufficient vouchers from the rabbies of the Jews themselves. Let me but name them, to shew the succession of delusion in the Jews. You have heard before, out of Josephus, the multitudes of false Messiahs before the destruction of Jerusalem: afterwards, A.C. 114. you set up another, in the reign of Trajan, one Andrew, which occasioned the destruction of many thousands of you: again, in the reign of Adrian, another, whom ye called Bar Cochab, i.e. the son of a star, alluding to the star of Jacob: and again, rebelling under this Messiah, caused a most dreadful destruction amongst you, insomuch that, as yourselves have told it in your own books, there was twice the number of Jews that perished upon this occasion, more than all those that came out of Egypt; and that you suffered more under Adrian, than under Nebuchadnezzar or Titus. When you were at last undeceived, (too late,) then you changed the name of this false Messiah from Bar Cochab, the son of a star, to Bar Cosibah, i.e. the son of a lie, as being a false Messiah.

Numb.
xxiv. 17.

And how oft have you been deceived since? In the year of Christ 434, in the reign of Theodosius the younger, another Pseudo-Messiah arose in the island of Crete, who said that he was Moses, and sent from heaven to carry the Jews in Crete on dry ground through the sea, and persuaded several of them to throw themselves into the sea.

In the year of Christ 520, another Pseudo-Messiah, one Dunaan, arose in Arabia, and, with the Jews who followed him, set upon the bishop and Christians in the city of Negra, and committed great outrages, till he was destroyed.

A. C. 529, the Jews and Samaritans in Palestine were seduced into rebellion by Julian, a Pseudo-Messiah, which occasioned the destruction of many of them.

And when Mahomet appeared about the year 620, the Jews flocked to him as their Messiah, to which he at first pretended. And they stuck to him, till, as some say, they saw him eat camel's blood; or, as others tell, for other reasons, they left him. Indeed he left them, and set up other pretences.

After, A. C. 721, they followed a certain Syrian, who said that he was Christ.

A. C. 1137, they followed another in France, which occasioned their banishment out of that country, and the slaughter of great numbers of them.

The year following, viz. A. C. 1138, in Persia, a false Messiah, taking arms, brought great mischiefs upon the Jews there.

A. C. 1157, the Jews rising under another Messiah in Spain, had well nigh all of them been cut off.

A. C. 1167, they suffered much under another Messiah, in the kingdom of Fez.

And the same year under another in Arabia, who gave for a sign, that after his head was cut off by the king of Arabia, he would rise to life. Which he did not: but by this escaped a more cruel death. And not long after, in the same twelfth century, they suffered much by another beyond Euphrates; who gave for his sign, that he would go to bed at night leprous, and rise sound in the morning.

About the year 1174, another rose in Persia, and led the Jews into rebellion; which occasioned great destruction among them, and one David Almusar occasioned the like to them in Moravia in Germany.

And again, in the same century, another Pseudo-Messiah; all mentioned by Maimonides, and other Jewish rabbins: who likewise tell us of that most famous Pseudo-Messiah in Persia, called David El David, alias, David Alroy, about the years 1199 or 1200, a great magician, who deluded many of the Jews.

A. C. 1222, many Jews followed a false Messiah in Germany, whom they called the son of David: and the same year expected their Messiah to be born of a woman, then with child, at Worms: but it proved a girl.

A. C. 1465, when the Saracens made such inroads upon Christendom, the Jews then thought their Messiah was come to fight their battles.

And the same year Rabbi Abraham Avenaris, a Jewish astrologer, from the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the sign Pisces, foretold the coming of the Messiah to be then at hand.

And afterwards, R. Aberbanal, in his Commentary upon Daniel, p. 84, 86. gathered the time of the Messiah's coming from the like conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces.

About the year 1497, the Jews were again deceived in Ishmael Sophus, whom they took for their Messiah, who, having got together an army of vile and profligate men, pursued his victories successfully through Media, Parthia, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Armenia: but at last cheated the Jews, and set up a new sect for Mahomet.

A. C. 1500, Rabbi Ascher Lemla appeared in Germany, as the forerunner of the Messiah, who, he promised, should come and restore the Jews to the land of Canaan that same year. And the Jews generally every where did believe him; and appointed public fasts and prayers to prepare for the coming of their Messiah.

About the year 1534, a new Messiah rose up in Spain; who was burned by Charles V.

As was another at Mantua, R. Salomo Malcho; whom many of the Jews did believe came again to life after he was burned, and every sabbath visited his wife Zephati.

But the emperor spared R. David, who called himself one of the emissaries of the Messiah, then soon to come: who, when he was at Rome, is said to have fasted six days together.

Another Pseudo-Messiah rose up in the East Indies about the year 1615.

And another in Holland, A. C. 1624.

But the famous Pseudo-Messiah Sabethai Zevi, A. C. 1666, is a story remarkably known; who, after all the expectation of the people of the Jews, turned at last Mahometan, to save his life.

And no longer since than the year 1682, there has got up another false Messiah, R. Mardochai, a German Jew; whom almost all the Jews in Italy,

and many in Germany, have owned, but, like wise men, with due respect to the inquisition, and self-preservation. Whether he be yet alive, or what stress the present Jews do lay upon him, I cannot tell, nor do I suppose they will be willing to own.

But, from the foregoing account, I would lay before them what a strange uncertainty they are at; running after every impostor for their Messiah; having lost all the marks whereby they may know their Messiah, nay, being willing they should be lost; and disputing against them for this only reason, that because all the marks given of the Messiah, in the Old Testament, do meet in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and can never meet in any other; therefore they would have no marks of him at all.

The learned Jew who disputed with Limborch, anno 1687, (five years after their last or present Messiah, R. Mardochai, appeared,) contends^m, that the prophets foretold neither the time nor place of the nativity of the Messiah: and saysⁿ, that miracles were not needful to prove his mission; but only to gather the Jews together from all parts of the world, and to conquer the nations.

Agreeable to this notion the Pseudo-Messiah before mentioned, who arose in Persia, A. C. 1138, when desired to shew some miracle, to prove his mission, said, that the Messiah was not to be known by miracles, but by his success in conquering the world.

And your famous Maimon says the same^o, that the Messiah was not to work miracles, but to fight the Lord's battles, and conquer all before him.

^m Limb. p. 73. ⁿ P. 55. ^o II. Melac. and Milch. c. 11.

Mahomet made the like excuse for his not working of miracles. He said^p, that Moses, Solomon, and Jesus, were sent to shew God's righteousness, wisdom, and clemency, to which miracles were necessary to gain belief: but that he (Mahomet) was sent to shew God's fortitude; to which no miracles were necessary, but to enforce it with the sword; which carried its own conviction.

The guilt and folly of this excuse is apparent. For at the first setting up of any for the Messiah, how shall it be known that he shall have success? We see how often the Jews have been deceived and ruined by it. But do they believe that their Messiah shall have success without interruption, all along from his first setting up? No; the learned Jew before mentioned, interpreting the death of the Messiah, which is spoke of Isaiah liii. only of troubles and afflictions which he should endure^q, says, it shall be in the wars with the nations, before he complete the redemption of the Jews, and then (says the learned Jew) shall be fulfilled that prophecy of Jeremiah, *Et erit dies tribulationis Jacob, sed ex ea salvabitur*; that the Jews shall suffer great tribulation, but shall be saved out of it: so that by this rule they cannot know their Messiah by his success, till he is quite ruined and destroyed, and they confounded, as it has hitherto befallen them.

One would think this enough to open their eyes; that whilst they have obstinately rejected the sure and infallible marks, which God by his prophets has given of the Messiah, they have left to themselves no marks or rules at all whereby they can know him, or which do distinguish him from every impostor.

^p Alcoran, c. 2, 3, 4, &c.

^q Limborch, p. 53. and 127.

John vii.
31.

The Jews, in our Saviour's time, did expect that the Messiah, when he came, would work miracles. Many of the false Messiahs pretended to it; and no doubt the present Jews would think it a great confirmation of any who should now set up for their Messiah. Which shews, that they dispute against the necessity of miracles to vouch the Messiah, because they cannot deny those of our Saviour. And it likewise discovers their diffidence in ever having a true Messiah to come, whatever they pretend, because they dare not put it to the issue of a miracle, or trust that they shall have any who shall be endowed with such a power.

Yet they reject him, who they cannot but own had that power; and confess that they are ready to acknowledge another without that power; that is, they reject the strongest credentials, and will accept of lesser. They cannot deny this to be their case. They will not say that they do not desire they had a Messiah, who could work miracles to vouch his mission: and their doctors have asserted, "That as the Messiah was to be greater than Moses, so when he came, he should work greater miracles than Moses had done;" as it is quoted out of R. Levi, Ben Gerson, Parascha, by Theodorick Hackspan, in his edition of R. Lipmann's book *Nizachon*. an. 1644. p. 387. Yet now they cry down miracles as a mark of the Messiah, because they despair of any such; that is, indeed, of any Messiah at all to come: for no otherwise can they know him, whenever they suppose that he should come. They confess that they cannot know him by the time when he should come, or by the works he shall do when come, other than by the issue of his battles; which

they cannot know beforehand: and consequently can never be sure with whom to join in time, before it be too late; as they have hitherto experimented in all their false Messiahs.

I would entreat them to think of another thing, as to the time of the Messiah's coming. They never set up any false Messiah, nor did any pretend to it, till near the time that our blessed Saviour came into the world; which was the time foretold by Daniel and the prophets: and since that time, they have been perpetually setting up of false Messiahs, one after another, even to our times. Which shews plainly that the time wherein our Messiah did come, was the time wherein he was generally expected by the Jews: and that then they understood their Law and their Prophets in the same sense that we have done, as to the time of the Messiah's coming, though now they would dissemble it.

VII. I come now, in the next place, to consider (what I have before hinted) the excuse that you have for the delay of your Messiah's coming, beyond the time (as yourselves have confessed) which was foretold by the prophets. And you have so little to say upon this point, that you only pretend your sins have hindered his coming. This is a very bare, and looks like a guilty put-off. Surely it cannot satisfy yourselves; for I pray you to consider,

1. What are those sins you now complain of? They must be more than common sins, that should defeat so many express and solemn prophecies. And by your interpretation of Isaiah liii. (before spoke to,) you pretend to be righteous and holy to a superlative degree.

But what are those sins that should prevent the

Read Deut.
ix.

coming of your Messiah? Are they greater than those of which you were formerly guilty in the days of Moses? and from that time to the captivity? (2 Kings xvii. 7—24.) in the captivity, and after? (Ezra ix. Nehem. ix. Ezek. xvi. Dan. ix. Zech. vii. and the whole prophecy of Malachi.) No; you are not now so guilty of these idolatries and vile abominations; you have greatly reformed yourselves from these; and (excepting only your rejecting of your Messiah, and standing out still against him) you have not now, nor have had since his coming, more sins to answer for, or more notorious, than other men: so that this, of your supposing the coming of the Messiah to be delayed for your sins, seems only to be an excuse, because you can find no other.

Zech. xiii.
1.

2. The coming of the Messiah is promised as a remedy for sin. *In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness:* and what is before quoted, Dan. ix. 24, expresses the design of his coming to be, *to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity.* So that our sins are so far from being a reason for the deferring of his coming, that they are rather an argument for the hastening of it. The prophet Jeremy, speaking of the coming of the Messiah, and the condition of the Jews at that time, recites their most horrible wickedness, and of Judah worse than Israel, and promises the new covenant of the Messiah as a redemption to the penitent; when God would give them *pastors according to his own heart, which should feed them with knowledge and understanding.* And to shew that this was not the renewing or restoring of the legal dispensation, but

Jer. iii.

v. 15.

the leaving it behind for one more excellent, it is added, *In those days, saith the Lord, they shall say* v. 16. *no more, the ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.* And this is the time of the great wickedness of Israel: and this is according to the tradition which your Rabbi Juda tells in Masoreta, under the title *de Synedrio, c. Helec.* that at the time of the coming of the Son of David the temple should be a den of thieves or unclean persons. And that this should be a time of great dissoluteness is likewise delivered in your Talmud, tit. *de Synedrio, et de Ponderibus, &c.* and by several of your rabbies. So that this excuse of your Messiah delaying his coming because of your sins, is against your own expositions and traditions, as well as not only without any ground from, but contrary to, the tenor of the holy scriptures; which I come next to shew yet more expressly.

3. The promises of the coming of the Messiah are not only positive, and without any condition, but the case is expressly put of the sins of David or of his posterity; and there God declares, that though he will punish those sins, yet that because of them he would not break or alter the promise he had given concerning the coming of the Messiah.

4. But I have another answer yet to give, and I beseech you seriously to consider of it; that is, whether it would not be as great a punishment to your sins, if God has blinded your eyes that you should not know your Messiah when he came; and a much greater punishment than if his coming had been delayed. And now consider whether this be

2 Sam. vii.
14, 15, 16.
Ps. lxxxix.
30, 33—37.

Psal. cxviii. 22. not the case. It has been plainly prophesied that your builders would reject the chief corner-stone.

Isa. viii. 14, 15. That he should be *for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And that many among them should stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken—*

Chap. xxix. 9, 10, 11. *Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed. Is not this literally your case? Are not your prophets now to you as a book sealed up? Do you understand by them when you are to expect your Messiah? or what are the signs of his coming? No, they are all long since past, and you are left in the dark, in endless and groundless expectation.*

And in this method there is no breach of God's promises, and yet his judgments have their full scope, and there is still room and hopes of his mercy. When his time comes to open your eyes, then will you return to him, and he will turn to you. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil covers his face from you, i. e. the true import and full end of the law; which veil is done away in Christ: for *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

5. To avoid all the absurdities of this pretence of yours, some of you have set up another notion, viz. that the Messiah did come at the time foretold by the prophets, and has been in the world ever since,

and is still; but, for your sins, conceals himself among the lazars or lepers that sit at the gates of Rome or elsewhere; others say, that he is in ^rparadise, but there fettered in a woman's hair: this we must suppose is by way of allusion to Samson and Dalilah: some of the rabbies put a mystical sense upon this, meaning by the woman's hair, in which the Messiah is tied, our evil concupiscence, which retards his coming.

How horribly absurd and ridiculous is this! These sort of strained excuses were enough to convert any men of reason amongst you: besides that they are contradictory, which shews one must be false; for the former pretence overthrows this, and this, if true, destroys that. But what foundation have you for this?

What prophecies have you for such a state of the Messiah?

What! was the end of his coming to keep himself concealed for sixteen hundred years? and all that time to undergo so miserable and wretched a life as you would have him?

How was his coming to be *a light to the Gentiles* so often prophesied of, if the Gentiles have not heard of him from that time to this?

If he has undergone the state of a leper and a beggar now for above 1700 years; how do you object the afflictions and low estate of Jesus for thirty-three years, as inconsistent with the glorious state of the Messiah?

But if he be come, and you know him not; and that this, you think, will solve all those prophecies

^r Theodor. Hackspan. ubi supra, p. 351.

concerning the time of his coming: behold, your own conjecture truly fulfilled! He is come, and you have not known him; while the Gentiles have been convinced by his miracles, and submitted to him, even to the uttermost parts of the earth, as was expressly prophesied of him.

Again; if you did not know him, what hinders but that you might likewise persecute him? And why should this seem a thing so impossible to you? Have ye not done the same to almost all of your own prophets? You stoned Zechariah in the *court of the house of the Lord*: you persecuted Jeremiah till the day that Jerusalem was taken: and the hands of your priests and your prophets were chief in the pursuit of his blood, and after them the cry of all the people; as it was in your persecution of your Messiah. How often did you rebel against Moses, against David, against Solomon, against all your prophets! How do they all complain against you! *Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers — But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.* And now it has risen a hundredfold more, since your despising and misusing of your Messiah. And your not knowing your Messiah was a just judgment upon you for your rejecting and persecuting all your former prophets. Elijah complained that you had slain them all, every one of the prophets, but himself alone; and he was

2 Chron.
xxiv. 21.
Jer. xxvi.
8, 9.

2 Chron.
xxxvi. 14,
15, 16.

1 Kings
xix. 10.

forced to fly for his life, and was miraculously preserved. In the solemn confession of the priests and Neh. ix. 16. the Levites, and the covenant which they and the princes sealed, they confess that they *slew the prophets who testified against them, to turn them to the Lord*. This branch was never forgot in all their confessions, for it was notorious; *We have not heark-* Dan. ix. 6. *ened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land*. Why then should it be thought a thing impossible with you, that you should not hearken unto the last Prophet, the Messiah, who refused to hearken to any before him? Read all your provocations recorded, and then Psal. cvi. your present obstinacy will not appear so strange to you, or so totally disproportionable to your former demeanour. It is said, *Our fathers understood not* ver. 7. *thy wonders in Egypt*: then it is possible that you might not understand the wonders of your Messiah.

Your forefathers killed the prophets; and your fathers built their sepulchres: and you say, *If we* Matt. xxiii. 30, 31, &c. *had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets*. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them who killed the prophets. And how have you filled up the measure of your fathers? As our Messiah told you beforehand that you would do: that he would send Luke xi. 49, 50. *you prophets and apostles, and that you would slay and persecute them: that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, might be required of your generation*. And how severely has it been required? Believe, in this, our Messiah to have been a true Prophet; and that

this last sin of your crucifying him, and persecuting his apostles and messengers whom he sent unto you, has been greater, as it has been more grievously punished, than all your former provocations : of which, that you may be more sensible, (for it is a material consideration,) I invite you, as the last thing I shall say upon this head, to make the comparison betwixt your former captivities and sufferings, and that much more heavy hand of God which has lain upon you since your crucifying of your Messiah.

6. In the book of Judges, you are told of the several captivities into which you were sold for your repeated idolatries : first, into the hand of the king of Mesopotamia, for eight years : then, secondly, after forty years of deliverance, unto the king of Moab, for eighteen years : thirdly, unto Jabin, king of Canaan, for twenty years : fourthly, into the hand of Midian, for seven years : fifthly, of the Philistines and Ammonites, for eighteen years : sixthly, of the Philistines, for forty years : the seventh was the great and longest captivity of seventy years in Babylon : all these for your idolatry. But, after this, you were cured of your idolatry ; and to this day have kept yourselves in the greatest abhorrence of it. And yet now, since your rejecting of our Messiah, and saying, *Let his blood be upon us and our children*, you have undergone not a bare captivity, as in Babylon, where you were all together, and prophets sent amongst you to comfort you, and assure you of a restoration, and that in seventy years ; but a dispersion over the face of the whole earth ; without a king, without any prophet, as a people forsaken of God ; and without a temple or

Judg. iii. 8,
11, 14.

Ch. iv. 2.

vi. 1.

x. 7.

xiii. 1.

sacrifice : and that not only for 70 or 700, but now almost 1700 years.

And if this heavy judgment be come upon you for your not understanding the promises of God, and thereby hardening yourselves against the clear proofs which your Messiah brought of his mission ; then is there no appearance of your being delivered till you shall repent of this greater sin, the rejecting and crucifying the Messiah, for which you are more grievously punished than you were for your idolatries.

The ingenious and learned Jew before mentioned answers to this^s, That the captivity of the ten tribes has been longer than that of the two tribes : and it cannot be said that the captivity or dispersion of the ten tribes was for the rejecting of their Messiah : and therefore, that it cannot be concluded that the lesser punishment of the two tribes was for a more heinous sin, (viz. of crucifying their Messiah,) than that sin (viz. of idolatry) for which, principally, the ten tribes were delivered to captivity.

Answ. Though the ten tribes were sent into captivity about one hundred and twenty years before the two tribes, yet their captivity has not been so long. For as the temporal punishment of any man ends with his death ; so the punishment of a nation, as a nation, ceases when that nation has lost its name, and is scattered or incorporated into other nations. Particular persons who have descended of that nation may suffer ; but the nation is no more, and so cannot be said to suffer when it is extinct : as when a regiment is broke, it is no more a re-

^s Limbor. p. 99.

giment, though the soldiers are incorporated into other regiments. Thus in families, a family is said to be extinct when the name is lost, and there are none left to support it; though all the particular persons of that family may live under other names, and in other families. And thus it is that the families of the ten tribes of Israel are long since lost in the world; all the Jews now known being of the family of Judah, as distinct from Israel. So that the family of Judah, consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with the Levites, are still preserved to suffer, a visible example of God's just judgment and indignation against them: the very names of all the other tribes of Israel being so far lost, as that not one of them is now known, nor does any Jew so much as pretend to be of any of those tribes.

Though it is very probable that many of the ten tribes are incorporated (albeit they may not know it) into the two remaining tribes, yet all go under the name of the two tribes: and therefore the two tribes are they only who are said to suffer; as they only (and such of the ten tribes as were then incorporated with them) were concerned in the rejecting and crucifying of their Messiah.

See Lam.
iv. 6.

But as the punishment of the two tribes has been so many hundred years continued longer than that of the ten tribes, for this their greater sin of crucifying their Messiah, so there was a plain and visible reason for the, at first, greater punishment of the ten tribes. 1. They rebelled from under the house of David. 2. They fell into schism against the house of Aaron, and set up new priests of their own. 3. As a consequence of both these, they set up a false wor-

ship, in the calves of Dan and Bethel; and returned not from their idolatry, their schism, and rebellion, till their extirpation.

And we may see a very legible hand of God upon them, in great judgments, all along from their revolt.

Judah had many bad kings, but some eminently good.

Israel had a succession only of nineteen kings from their defection, among whom there was not one that was good.

And they were carried away captive one hundred and twenty years before the captivity of Judah.

But then the captivity of Judah having been continued so much longer than theirs, (as before has been said,) swells up the punishment of Judah now to exceed theirs, as their sin in crucifying their Messiah has far exceeded all the sins of the house of Israel.

Let me add to this the many and miserable massacres and destructions of the two tribes, since our Saviour, under the several false Messiahs whom they set up; in one of which they suffered more than in either of the destructions of Jerusalem, by the Chaldeans or the Romans, as before has been shewn from their own confessions.

Now let us consider, that at the day of judgment there is no representation of nations, but every man suffers for his own sin: national judgments are only in this world.

And hence it is observable, that no wicked nation has ever yet escaped a national judgment in this world: though God may bear long with them, yet if they do not repent, by a national sorrow and

amendment, judgment overtakes them even here: for nowhere else are there any national, either mercies or judgments.

And as all nations have been wicked in their several degrees, so have they every one been severally punished according to their demerits, even before the sons of men.

But there are no judgments that have befallen any nation so legible as what have been sent upon your nation; particularly upon the two tribes. No nation, since the earth began, has been kept under so long a captivity and dispersion; so wonderfully preserved, so remarkably punished, and preserved for punishment: and, when God's time shall come, for a glorious restoration, in the acknowledgment of your only true and divine Messiah!—O that this were the time!

But the learned Jew^t has another answer, viz. that the Jews have not been free from idolatry since their return from the captivity of Babylon, nor are at this day; and therefore that the comparison must fail which we draw betwixt the punishments that have come upon them for their former idolatries, and this sixteen hundred years' dispersion, after they had forsaken their idolatry; which, he says, they have not yet forsaken. He says^u, that they have it in the utmost abomination, and avoid it wherever they can; but that for fear, or other base motives, very many of them have turned Mahometans in all the dominions of the Turk, in Africa, in Asia, in Persia, and Arabia. But though this be an apostasy, and forsaking of their law, yet he does not charge it

^t Limbt. p. 101. n. iv.

^u Ibid. p. 102.

as idolatry, because Mahometans do not worship God by images. But then he returns upon the Christians, and says, that since the idolatry of the church of Rome, multitudes of the Jews have, to avoid persecution, embraced the popish idolatry in divers countries: and even in our own times, says he, we have fresh experiences of it: he names the whole Neapolitan synagogue of Barcelona, and all the others in Catalonia, who turned to the church of Rome: and in Spain and Portugal they have turned so fast, that he says, *Ex Judæis apostatis fere omnes et principes, nobiles, et populares, originem ducunt: quod in iis regionibus adeo notum, ut nemo dubitaverit*; i. e. “that almost all of them, “princes, nobles, and commons, are sprung from “apostate Jews; which is so well known in those “countries, as that none doubt of it: notwithstanding,” as he says, “for the obtaining of great places “and honours, especially ecclesiastical, they are obliged to renounce Judaism, and to bring certificates that they are not descended of the Jews: “which” (as we may easily believe him) “are attainable at that as well as other courts, where “money is not wanting.” This indeed does plainly shew the suspicion, at least, that they are descended of the Jewish race. He says moreover, that many of their clergy, bishops, and even of the inquisitors themselves, are Jews in their hearts; and dissemble Christianity for the avoiding of persecution, and to gain honours and preferments; of whom, he says, some do repent and fly as they can: and that “there “are in Spain both bishops and the gravest of their “monks, whose parents, brothers, and sisters, do fly “into this country, (that is, into Holland,) that they

“ may freely profess Judaism : that many of the
“ friars, Augustins, Franciscans, Jesuits, Domini-
“ cans, have there, and in several other countries,
“ renounced their idolatry,” i. e. of the church of
Rome. This, I suppose, he would make an argu-
ment of their returning back to Judaism : but he
does not deny that there are many Christian coun-
tries who have thrown off the idolatry of the church
of Rome, and yet do not Judaize. But now to con-
sider all this whole excuse :

1. If many Jews, to avoid persecution, submit to
idolatrous practices, as this learned Jew confesses
that he himself had often bowed the knee to Baal,
for which he begs God’s pardon ; yet this is still
but the defection of particular persons, and cannot
be compared to those national idolatries, wherein
their kings and priests and people did concur, of
their own choice, without any force or compulsion ;
as were their many idolatries before the captivity of
Babylon, and none the like since : their principles
were then corrupted, but not since ; for they confess
that they have idolatry in the greatest abhorrence,
though many of them cannot resist unto martyr-
dom.

2. But this learned Jew has afforded us a very
material consideration ; for if all Spain and Portu-
gal, or the greatest part of them, and likewise many
in other countries, are descended of the stock of the
Jews, this may let us in to conjecture what is become
of the ten tribes. It is certain they are dispersed
among other nations : and though they have lost
their name, and consequently their nation, yet their
posterity must remain somewhere under other de-
nominations. It is reasonable to believe that many

of them did return to Judæa, after the two tribes were restored to their country, and Jerusalem and their temple were built again : and consequently are mixed among them to this day. It will not be so easy, without this, to reconcile the vast numbers of the Jews that were destroyed in the siege of Jerusalem, under their several false Messiahs, and that are now dispersed all over the world : from whence I make these inferences.

1. That many of the ten tribes might be involved in the guilt of crucifying their Messiah, and standing out against him unto this day, though all going then under the name of Judah, or the two tribes ; and consequently sharing with them in the punishment.

2. If the Spaniards, Portuguese, and other Christians, are of the race of the Jews, they must be of the ten tribes ; so far at least as they were mixed with the two tribes : and they turned more into other nations than the two tribes, because they have lost their name and nation, which only survives in the two tribes. Therefore the ten tribes may be said to be more converted to Christianity than the two tribes ; who only, by name, of all the tribes persist in their infidelity against Christ our Lord.

This will make the punishment of the ten tribes, for their idolatry, schism, and rebellion, much less than that of the two tribes, for the rejecting and crucifying of their Messiah ; and this sin of the two tribes to be much greater than that of their own former idolatries, as the punishment of it has been many ways more remarkably transcendent : which I pray God you may lay to heart as you ought.

Acts xxi.
20. vi. 7.

3. Many myriads of the Jews, as well priests as others, were converted to Christianity, in the beginning of the gospel, upon conviction of what they themselves had seen and heard: about three thousand at one sermon, five thousand at another, *multitudes both of men and women*. These, with their religion, lost (in time) their nation, or the name of Jews, having embraced that of Christians in the stead of it: and their posterity are Christians, though of the Jewish race.

Acts ii. 41.
iv. 4. v. 14.

Now, by reasonable computation, there are more of these Christian Jews at this day in the world, than of all that are known by the name of Jews.

For the Jews were almost all cut off, and utterly extinct, in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus: and more afterwards by Adrian, for the adhering to their false Messiah, Barcosbas. And all that now go by the name of Jews are sprung from the small remainders that were left out of these destructions, like brands plucked out of the fire.

Matt. xxiv.
16.

Whereas the Christian Jews escaped all these, and all that came upon the other Jews, for their several false Messiahs before mentioned. And, which is wonderfully observable, the Christian Jews that were in Jerusalem when it was besieged, were saved by a miraculous providence: the siege being unaccountably raised for a short time, till the Christian Jews, taking hold of that warning of our Saviour, fled to Pella, a city in the mountains; and thereby escaped that dreadful overthrow, which swept away the unbelieving Jews that waited their fate in Jerusalem. By this it appears that the stock of the Christian Jews has increased and spread much further than that of the infidel Jews; whose

tree was twice cut down by Titus and Adrian even to the ground, and left to spring again out of the old root; besides the many great loppings afterwards under several others of their false Messiahs. Whereas the believing Jews have increased and multiplied without any of these interruptions; and spread far and wide through the world. From whence we must conclude, that much the greatest number of the Jews are converted, and have embraced the Christian faith; and by this means are delivered from that servitude and dispersion, which now lies only as a curse upon those infidel Jews who continue in their obstinacy against the Messiah.

Let me here take notice of another passage in the place before quoted of Limborch, where the learned Jew, speaking of the defection of so many of the Jews to idolatry, to Mahometism, &c. according to the countries where they live, wishes the Jews were as good as this argument of the Christians would suppose them, viz. that they had reformed from their idolatry since their return from the captivity of Babylon, and were in other respects better than before, excepting that sin of rejecting their Messiah, and persisting in it: which this learned Jew will by no means allow; but, to avoid the force of this argument, he makes the Jews now more wicked than ever. Upon which occasion I would mind you of your exposition (before mentioned) of the fifty-third of Isaiah, which makes them most holy and righteous, (see p. 89, &c.) and that their dispersion was for the conversion of the Gentiles by them; whereas now you make them grow more and more wicked, and that they are corrupted every where

with the idolatries and delusions of the nations, instead of converting them.

Theodor. Hackspan, in his book before quoted, p. 394, cites the Jewish Rabbies and Talmud, making the ancient Jews much better than the modern : he quotes Jalkut upon the first of Isaiah, and upon these words, that *righteousness lodged in Jerusalem*. R. Juda, F. R. Simonis, says, “ that there was “ not a man then to be found in Jerusalem, in “ whose hands any sin was to be found.” But how was this ? “ The daily morning sacrifice did cleanse “ the sins of the night ; and the daily evening sacrifice the sins of each day ; so that none was to be “ found in Jerusalem upon whom there was any sin.” Thus he. But of the Jews, after the daily sacrifice did cease, it is said in the Talmud by Jochanan Massech. Joma, cap. 1. that “ a nail of the former “ Jews was better than the whole body of the after “ Jews :” because the daily sacrifice was wanting, by which the former Jews were cleansed.

See how vile the modern Jews are here made ever since the destruction of the second temple ! how vile this learned Jew here makes them ! and this, that they might find an excuse for the delay of the Messiah thus long after the time foretold by the prophets.

But at another turn, when they apply what is said of the sufferings of the Messiah in the fifty-third of Isaiah to their own present suffering state ; then they are *the righteous servants of the Lord*, and *there is no deceit in their lips* ! Then do they apply to themselves all that righteousness which is there spoken of the Messiah ! At one time they are more vile than the heathen among whom they are

mixed; at another time they are righteous above all that are on the earth, and by their righteousness the Gentiles are to be converted.

These contradictory pretences, set up severally as they are pinched, shew the desperateness of their cause: therefore I will labour this point no further, but proceed to another topic.

VIII. It is strange that you will adhere so obstinately to the letter of those promises made to Levi, which yet you must acknowledge are, (according to the letter,) and have been, long broken; and yet so easily get over the letter of the promises concerning the Messiah; which can never be fulfilled but in the person of Jesus Christ.

Especially considering that in that famous prophecy of the Messiah, Psalm cx. it is expressly said, that he should be a priest, not of the order of Levi, but of Melchizedek. Here was a new priesthood; and a change of the priesthood does necessarily infer a change also of the law. In your sense of the promises to Levi, you make that promise of the future priesthood after another order, to be a contradiction to the promises made to Levi; but in our sense they both stand together, and the one fulfils and completes the other. If you will admit no change of the Levitical priesthood, you must throw off the Psalms of David, as well as the gospel of Christ. Then consider that the promise to the priesthood, of which David then prophesied, was confirmed by an oath, that God would not alter his purpose, *I have sworn and will not repent*: there was no oath to the priesthood of Levi. Again, the priesthood of the Messiah was declared to be eternal; *Thou art a priest for ever*. And the type of this

priesthood in Melchizedek was more noble than that of Levi ; because Abraham, the father of Levi and of all Israel, did pay an acknowledgment to the priesthood of Melchizedek, as superior to his own, in paying of tithes to Melchizedek, instead of receiving tithes from him, and being blessed by Melchizedek, as his superior.

Isa. lxvi.
21.

When the flowing in of the Gentiles to the church is described, it is written, *I will take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord* ; or, if this were to be understood of the Jews, yet the covenant with Levi would be at an end if the priesthood were enlarged to let in those of other tribes. And

Exod. xix.
6.

it is promised, *ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests*. This could not be under the Mosaical dispensation, but it is under the evangelical ; where the priesthood, which is designed to serve the whole earth, is not, it cannot be confined to one family, or tribe, or nation : and so the whole kingdom of God, which is the whole world, as they that are made capable of the covenant of grace, so also of the priesthood.

And if the whole Gentile world were gathered unto you, (as you expect,) then surely one tribe of Levi would not be sufficient for priests to them all : so that according to your own expectation there must be a change. And yet,

IX. Your great objection is, that God cannot alter any thing that he has once ordained. It is true, God is immutable, and cannot change ; and what he ordains must answer the ends for which he has ordained it : he does not always tell us what those ends are, and therefore we cannot always tell when they are accomplished. But when he pleases to make known to us the ends for which he has or-

dained such things, what it is they tend to, and when they are to be accomplished ; then when they are accomplished at the time he has named, to think this any breach of promise or alteration in God, which is the highest proof of his veracity and unchangeableness, is a great weakness in our understandings, and our great unhappiness when this betrays us to oppose and fight against the counsel of God, and forfeit our share in his glorious dispensations, all ordained to bring us to bliss.

1. This objection of yours, which keeps you from Christianity, is that which has divided the Samaritans from you. They stick to the institutions given to the fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and think that what was after commanded to Moses cannot alter what God had before appointed. *Our* John iv. 20. *fathers worshipped in this mountain, (said the woman of Samaria to our Messiah,) and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.* Our Lord determined the case on your side, against the Samaritans, and said that *salvation is of the Jews* : but by the same argument that you can defend yourselves against the Samaritans, you must yield up the cause to the Christians; for if God could alter his institutions from what he gave to the fathers to what he commanded by Moses, why not from what he commanded by Moses to what he instituted by Christ ?

2. If you say that the argument will run on to all changes, as from what he instituted by Christ to what it is pretended he anew revealed to Mahomet, and so on to the end of the world ; and then nothing can be certain :

I answer, that Mahomet could not prove his pre-

tended revelations by those marks as Moses and Christ did, and they only, as shewn in the first part of this Discourse: and we may safely venture all the impostures in the world to counterfeit these marks, and to believe them, if they can.

Deut. xviii.
18.

But in the next place, Christ was foretold by Moses: yea and all the prophets that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days in which our Messiah came into the world, and fulfilled all that they had prophesied of him: so that the gospel is a confirmation and fulfilling of the law, and bears witness to it.

But though the Alcoran does acknowledge both the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and so far bears witness to them; yet it cannot shew that Mahomet was foretold either by Moses or Christ, or by any of the prophets: nay, Christ has told that he is the last, and none to come after him; and therefore gives us caution to believe none such: so that the Alcoran is in direct opposition both to the Law and the Gospel.

Deut. xviii.
19.

If Moses had said that he himself was the last that God would send, then could not you expect any Messiah to come: but since Moses has told us of a prophet that God would send after him, and commanded all to hear him, and threatens God's judgments upon those who will not hearken to the words of God which he shall tell them; what difficulty should you make to hearken unto him, who has come with the same attestation and seal of God as Moses himself did?

3. If you say that you are forbidden, Deut. xiii. to trust even miracles against what Moses commanded: that scripture shall be considered by and

by, and it will be shewn that it extends only as to the worship of false gods; and that they are not true but seeming miracles that are there spoke of.

But your Talmud (tit. *de Synedrio*) gives this as a standing rule, that "any command whatsoever may without scruple be transgressed by the command of a prophet;" that is, who works miracles to attest his mission.

This is to be understood of those commands which stand only upon positive precepts of God's institution, and have not a moral, which is an indispensable obligation in their own nature.

And of this there are many examples in scripture, even where no miracles were wrought to warrant them; but they gave place oftentimes to cases of necessity and public good.

How oft have the treasures of the temple, which were hallowed, being dedicated to God, and the very gold upon the doors and pillars of the temple, been given to heathen and idolatrous kings, (when other treasure there was none,) to procure peace to the kingdom upon great emergencies! and no censure passed upon this.

David, in a case of necessity, eat of the hallowed ^{1 Sam. xxi.} bread, and those who were with him, of which it was not lawful for any but the priests to eat; and was blameless.

The command of the sabbath was transgressed as oft as the eighth day for the circumcision of a child fell upon that day.

Joshua, and all the men of war, compassed Jericho on the sabbath day. ^{Josh. vi.}

Circumcision (so positively commanded) was omitted forty years in the wilderness. ^{Josh. vi. 5.}

1 Sam. vii.
7, 17.

Samuel sacrificed at Mizpeh, and built an altar at Ramah, neither of which was the place that God had appointed; which was contrary to the general command, Deut. xii. 13, 14. And, besides, Samuel was no Levite, and therefore it was death for him to offer sacrifice, by Numbers xviii. 7.

1 Kings
xviii. 38.

The same did Elijah, (who was not a Levite,) and had God's approbation by a great miracle then shewn.

Deut. xii.
5, 6.

Ps. lxxviii.
60.

The place of which Moses spoke, that God would *choose to put his name there*, was established at Shiloh, which bore the name of the Messiah, and was called *the tabernacle which God had pitched among men*. It remained there from the days of Joshua to Samuel, about four hundred and fifty years: and thither they brought their tithes, sacrifices, &c. and came up yearly to worship, as Moses had commanded, *to the house of the Lord*, which was there.

1 Sam. i. 3,
7.

Yet this was altered by the authority of David and Solomon; who set it up at Jerusalem, and moreover made several changes in the courses of the priests and the Levites, and other parts of the worship of God, which Moses had commanded; particularly as to the time of the Levites' service, which, by the commandment of Moses, was from the age of thirty to fifty: but this, *by the last words of David*, was altered, and they were to begin their service at the age of twenty. And the reason is there given, because the manner of their service was changed, not being so laborious as when they were to carry the tabernacle upon their shoulders: the practice of

Numb. iv.
3, 23.
1 Chron.
xxiii. 27.

Josh. xviii.

1.
1 Sam. i. 7.
iv. 3.

which ceased when the house of the Lord was built at Shiloh, after the conquest of Canaan; for then

the ark was fixed, and all the tribes repaired to it at Shiloh, and it was not carried about with them from place to place as formerly: yet this alteration of the age of the Levites' service was not made till the time of David, but served ever after.

Ezra iii. 8.

And there was no prophecy going before to warrant these changes; nor had Moses spoke any thing of them.

But he spoke expressly of the Messiah, and implied changes to be made by him; for he gives strict charge to *hearken to what he should command*; and threatens God's judgments to those who should refuse. Now what occasion was there for this, if he had no more in commission than Moses had, and were to command nothing more or less than Moses had done? If he were only to reinforce what Moses commanded, that was the business of lesser prophets, and would make him less than Moses; which I suppose none of you will say.

Deut. xviii.
15, 18, 19.

But beside Moses, we have the joint voice of all the prophets, which do in express terms declare, that the Messiah would make great changes from what Moses commanded, and introduce a much more glorious state into the church; which Isaiah expresses by *new heavens and a new earth*; and tells us, that at that time God would throw off the Jews, and make others his chosen; *And ye* (says God to your nation) *shall leave your name for a curse to my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name. And, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be*

Isa. lxxv. 17.
lxxvi. 22.
lxxv. 15.

Jer. iii. 16.

Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. *done any more. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.*
 See Ezck. xvi. 61. Not by thy covenant.

And it is told that the Messiah should be a priest, but not of the order of Levi, as before shewn. And, as your priesthood, so it is said, that God would reject and put an end to your sacrifices, and bring in their place the great and only expiatory sacrifice of the Messiah: *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required: what then? A body hast thou prepared me, (says the Messiah,) and, lo, I come, to do thy will, O God: in the volume of the book it is so written of me.*

Thus it is written of the Messiah, and of the changes which he was to introduce: yet you will have none of them, because they are changes; though you make no scruple of the changes by David, Solomon, and others, of which there were no prophecies: nor did they attest their mission, as our Messiah has done, by such a multitude of miracles and of such a wonderful nature, as never before were shewn upon the earth.

Nay, you yourselves have made alterations, without the command of any prophet that you can produce, or of any miracles to warrant you. For you

are commanded not to add to what Moses commanded, as well as not to diminish: yet how many traditions of your elders do you observe, that were never commanded by Moses; as the washing of pots and cups, &c. Neither is that all; for you have
 Deut. iv. 2. v. 32. xii. 32. Josh. i. 7. Prov. xxx. 6.

traditions quite contrary to the laws of God, and which render them of none effect. Moses said, *Honour* (that is, support) *your father and mother*: but ye say, if a man has made a voluntary *corban* or gift of what he has, though in reversion to the temple or other use of your law, he is free from that part of the fifth command, which you have thus enervated by your tradition. And many other such like things do ye. Nay, you have laid an eternal fund of traditions to vie with the written law: these you supposed delivered to Moses, and by him orally conveyed to your elders, of which they have the keeping, and their stock is inexhaustible. And these you make of equal authority to the written law.

What prophet or miracle had you for changing of the posture in eating the passover, so positively commanded, *Exod. xii. 11*? Yet after you were at rest in Canaan, you made your own construction upon the equity of the command, and released yourselves from the trouble of that manner of eating it.

You likewise added a *postcænium* to it, which you observed with as much strictness as the passover itself.

You added baptism to circumcision; and several other things which were not commanded in your law.

Yet you reject your Messiah, because, you say, he made alterations in the ordinances which Moses delivered.

X. From what has been said, I hope it will not be a difficult task to remove from you all scruple as to that master objection which you most insist upon, grounded upon *Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.* where it is said, *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer*

of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. From hence you would infer, that you are not to believe our Messiah, let his miracles be never so great, because he seeks to turn you after other gods.

Answ. 1. The sign or wonder here mentioned is not any true and real miracle; but only telling of something which might afterwards come to pass. And this has happened, and may happen many times by chance, which yet may seem a wonder to the people, and it is only against these false and seeming miracles that God here guards his people; which he sometimes permits for the trial of their faith. Therefore observe the word *miracle* is not used here, only *a sign, a wonder, or a dream.*

But none can work a true and real miracle but God; and it cannot without the highest blasphemy be supposed, that God would work a miracle on purpose to set his seal to a lie. If this were possible, it would destroy all revelation; for how could we know when it were true or false? Therefore, where there can be no doubt as to the miracle, there can be no scruple as to the revelation which that is brought to attest.

Now the miracles of our Jesus were such as that there can be no manner of doubt concerning them: the most hardened Deist upon the face of the earth,

if he allowed the matters of fact, would grant them to be true and real miracles. And you must either allow them to be such, or throw off all those of Moses, which were neither so great nor so many.

This is the first answer I give, which concerns the nature of the sign or wonder that is spoke of, Deut. xiii. The next answer is concerning that thing for which such a sign, or wonder, or dream is produced; and that is, *to go and serve other gods*. And as to this, consider,

2. What are these gods here spoke of? It is told, ver. 7. *Namely, the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth*; that is, all the gods of the heathen world: and against all these our Jesus is as severe as your Moses, and confirms this very text, and all that Moses commanded against them. They are called *devils* over and over again. And Christianity, wherever it has come, has rooted out all the pagan idolatry more than ever the law has done. 1 Cor. x. 20, 21.

Obj. 1. If you say that our Jesus would have men to worship himself. First, That is none of the gods mentioned in this place of Deuteronomy; for you will not say that any of the heathen did worship the Messiah. Secondly, You do not refuse worship to the Messiah: David called him Lord, and said of him, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*—and, *God, even thy God, hath anointed thee*—and says to the king's daughter (that is, the church) *he is thy Lord, and worship thou him*. And God calls him his *fellow*, or associate, Ps. cx. 1. and commands all the kings of the earth to *kiss* Ps. xlv. 6, 7, 11. (that is, to worship) *the Son*, (for that was an act of Zech. xiii. 7. Ps. ii. 12. Job xxxi. 27.

1 Kings xix. 18. worship.) And David speaks of him, (which can be
 Hos. xiii. 2. applied to Solomon no otherwise than as he was a
 Ps. lxxii. 5, type of the Messiah,) *They shall fear thee as long*
 8, 11, 15, *as the sun and moon endure, throughout all genera-*
 17. *tions—He shall have dominion from sea to sea,*
and unto the ends of the earth—All kings shall
worship, or fall down before him; all nations shall
serve him—Prayer shall be made ever unto him;
or, he shall ever be adored—All the nations of
the earth shall be blessed in him, and all the hea-
then shall praise him. These are the very epithets
 given to the Messiah, (and can belong properly to no
 Hagg. ii. 7. other,) who is called *the desire of all nations*; and
 Gen. xii. 3. *that in him all the nations of the earth should be*
 xviii. 18. *blessed*; and *to him shall the gathering of the Gen-*
 xxii. 18. *tiles be*: which is to Christ our Jesus, but was not
 xlix. 10. to Solomon, unless in a very low sense, as he was
 greatly famed for his wisdom, which made him
 much respected by many of the heathen; but they
 had no relation to him, nor were gathered unto him
 as their king or their saviour, as they are now to
 our Jesus, whom Solomon did but faintly represent:
 and if you should apply the worship before men-
 tioned to Solomon, then surely much more to the
 Messiah. So that the worship of him is established
 in your own scriptures, and comes noway within
 the prohibition of Deut. xiii. which respects only
 the worship of the heathen deities. Let me add
 here what your Talmud (tit. *de Synedrio*) says,
 that Jesus is not the name of any idol, nor can be
 reckoned such, when the Christians do refer the ho-
 nour they pay to him to God the Creator of all.
 And tit. *Schebuoth et Shabbath* agrees with Rabbi
 Solomo, who, upon Gen. xxii. 18. does acknowledge

that God might take upon him human nature, and thinks that he had done it for a time. And the Chaldee Paraphrase (upon Hosea i. 7. and other places) calls the Messiah *the Word of God*, the same that our St. John calls him, (John i. 1, &c.) And your Talmud upon Taanith says from Isa. xxv. 9. that at that time God would be pointed at and shewn even with the finger.

The above-quoted Psalms, which speak of the worship of the Messiah, are owned to refer to the Messiah. The second Psalm by David Kimchi, Abraham Esdra, R. Jonathan in Bereshith rabba, and that most learned Rabbi Saadia, who owns the same of Psalm cx. as the Chaldee Paraphrase does of Psalm xlv.

But there needs not attestations; for these scriptures are expressed in such a strain as may indeed be accommodated, at an infinite distance, to transactions here below; but cannot be properly applied, nor verified of any but the Messiah: and some are such as can in no way be adapted to any other. What other did David call his Lord? What other claims the worship of all the kings upon the earth? Whose kingdom but his is without end, and extends to *the uttermost part of the earth*? All which, in the second Psalm, is given to the Son, but was not given to David. Neither was it given to David that his flesh should not see corruption, as it is promised, Psal. xvi. 9, 10. but was verified of none that ever entered the grave, except only of our Messiah.

Obj. 2. You urge our doctrine of the holy Trinity as inferring plurality of Gods; and so to be brought within the prohibition, Deut. xiii. But you cannot say that this is any of the gods of the heathen, who

only are expressed in that command, when we profess to worship none other but that one only God, who spoke to your fathers in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; and we detest all thoughts of any other God. Our great Messiah taught us this to be *the first of all the commandments*, that *the Lord our God is one Lord*. And all expositions of the blessed Trinity, or inferences from it, that do in the least interfere with this, we condemn as impious and heretical.

Mark xii.
29.

But whether this one most simple and uncompounded nature of God may not be communicated to three eternal Persons, without either confusion of the Persons, or dividing of the substance, does in no way interfere with the unity of the nature; because this very hypothesis does suppose the unity of the nature in the strictest sense that is possible. And if we should be under great difficulty (as how can it be otherwise?) in explaining such an unfathomable mystery, yet can it not infer polytheism upon us, while we are ready to part with all rather than to admit of that.

You know we bring many proofs for this out of your scriptures of the Old Testament, (some are named hereafter,) and you cannot infer from hence that we do not own these scriptures, (nay this is a proof that we do own them,) only that we do not understand them aright. And if you should prove against us that we do not rightly understand (who does?) the divine incomprehensible nature, while we contend as earnestly as you for the necessity of its unity, you cannot charge us with polytheism for our mistake in other matters: and therefore this can never come under the prohibition of Deut. xiii.

I say not this that I would wave entering with you upon this subject; but there is not room for it in this short essay: it would require a discourse by itself. All that I am at present concerned in, is to shew you that this can be no cause for your rejecting of our Messiah. There are some called Christians who say that we have mistaken our Messiah in this point; but I would be loath to clear you from the objection by that method; only thus much it shews you, that, if we have mistaken the gospel, so have we the law too, as to the doctrine of the holy Trinity: and this can be no more an argument that we set up polytheism against the law, than against the gospel, which as strongly asserts the unity of God as the law, and confirms all that the law says of it. Therefore if you reject the gospel because we would infer a Trinity from thence, you must upon the same account reject the law too. If our inferences are not just, the gospel is cleared as well as the law; and if our arguments do hold, then the law does infer a Trinity as well as the gospel.

Nor is it we Christians alone that would infer a Trinity from your law; your own cabbalists do distinguish God into three lights; and some of them call them by the same names as the Christians, of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and yet say that this does not at all break the unity of God. Your famous Philo expresses the same in many places: upon the sacrifices of Cain and Abel he says, that "God was accompanied with his two supreme virtues of Power and Goodness: and that God, being one, did produce out of his clear mind three operations, of which each is unmeasurable or infinite; for that his powers are unlimitable." And

in his second book of the Husbandry of Noah, he distinguishes these into τὸ ὄν, τὸ δεσποτικόν, τὴν ἴλεω δύναμιν, i. e. being, power, and goodness. In his Allegories he calls the Word by the name of God, and the Maker of the world, or the great Instrument of God, whereby he made the world, the same as our gospel, John i. 3. And in his book before quoted, of Husbandry, he calls the Word by the same name as we do, Heb. i. 3. Χαρακτὴρ, *the express image* of God. Moses the son of Nehemannus calls him *the Angel, the Redeemer*, who is called *the Face of God*; that is, says he, *God himself*, the same that appeared to Jacob at Bethel, and said to Moses in the bush, *I am the God of thy father*, &c. the Lord that should come to his temple; and *the Angel of the covenant* prophesied of, Mal. iii. 1.

Maimonides in his book of Foundations, and after him Joseph Albo, distinguish in God, first, that which knows; secondly, that which is known; thirdly, the knowledge itself.

But I will not detain you here with quotations; our Eusebius, in his book of the Preparation of the Gospel, p. 327. tells you that all your rabbies, “after the God of all and his firstborn Wisdom, do join into the same divine nature a third, whom they call the Holy Ghost, by whom your inspired persons were enlightened.” And you do all generally agree that this Holy Spirit was not any thing that was created; and yet you distinguish it from him that sent it. Your Rabbi — tells us that in the word *Elohim* there are three degrees, each distinct by itself, yet all one; joined in one, yet not divided from one another.

And as you make that Holy Spirit which inspired

the prophets not to be a creature, yet distinct from him who sent him: so you make what you call the schechina to be a divine thing; and distinguish it not only from God, but from that Holy Spirit: as in your Jerusalem Gemara, of Documents, chap. 3. and the Babylonish Gemara, tit. *Joma*, cap. 1. Your R. Jonathan, in the preface *Ecka Rabthi*, says, that the schechina waited three years and a half upon mount Olivet, expecting the conversion of the Jews.

This was the place where our Jesus (the true Luke xxi. 37. schechina) made his abode: and whence he rode xix. 29. into Jerusalem to accomplish his blessed passion. And the time of his preaching was about three Luke xiii. 7. years; so long, he said, he would bear with the obstinate Jews. This may be applied as to what your high priest said, though himself knew not the true John xi. 51. import of it.

Now then, all these forecited testimonies to the holy Trinity, whether of Jews or Christians, are not the setting up of any other God, but only searching into the nature of that God whom we acknowledge: as, to give an example, (though any parallel to God must be at an infinite distance,) we argue three great faculties in our soul, the understanding, the memory, and the will; and that these may be understood without either confusion of the faculties, or division of the substance of the soul. And suppose that some should object that this was making of three souls; I say, that whatever the consequence might be from this hypothesis, yet that no man could be justly charged with holding three souls in man, who professed that he held but one. We are not to be charged with the consequences of an opinion, so as to infer that we do not hold that opinion: for we

may not see all the consequences of what we hold. Therefore though three faculties should infer three souls, yet cannot he who holds three faculties be charged with holding of three souls, while he does but hold one soul; and thinks that the contrary does not follow from his holding of three faculties in the same soul.

Thus, though three Persons did infer three Gods; yet does not he hold three Gods, who holds three Persons in one and the selfsame God.

If you say that this will excuse all idolatry, as of those who worshipped the sun, &c. because of God's supposed residence there; I answer, no; because supposing of that residence, yet it would be idolatry to worship the sun, or any thing else, merely because of God's residence in it. As you would have thought it idolatry to have worshipped the temple, or the cloud of glory, because of God's special presence, which was there afforded.

But they did not think it to be idolatry; was it therefore none? No, our thoughts cannot alter the nature of things; and there are sins of ignorance. None ever confessed, no, nor I believe, thought himself to be an idolater; for then it must be supposed that he would not continue in it. But he that adores one God in three Persons (supposing him mistaken in his judgment) comes not under either of the branches of idolatry; first, of a false object; secondly, of a false manner of worship. For the manner, there is no pretence; that consists in the worship of God by images, (which he has forbidden,) whether artificial, of our own making; or natural, by any creature of God's making; as any of the host of heaven, sun, moon, or stars; or any thing here

below, as of men, birds, beasts, fish, &c. though the worship be referred to God, as represented by them; or from his supposed residence or presence in them. This is idolatry in the manner of our worship: but nothing of this can be applied to the three Persons, which are supposed to be God himself. This was your idolatry in the golden calf, which you did not take to be God himself, that you yourselves had made; nor could such folly be supposed in your Solomon, as to think the images he made to be that God that made him. This was the idolatry forbidden in the second command.

Then, for the first command, which relates to the object of worship. If that be taken for setting up any creature as the Supreme Being; or giving divine honour to angels or other ministers of God, as inferior or middle deities, betwixt the Supreme Being and us, as the heathens thought their demons, whom therefore they called *dii medioximi*: in neither of these senses can idolatry be applied to the three Persons supposed to be in the divine nature. For, 1. they are not creatures; nor, 2. any inferior deities, nor so supposed to be; but all equally to partake of the same one divine nature, as the three faculties do of the same one and indivisible soul. And therefore whatever mistake may be supposed in the hypothesis, yet it cannot come under any notion of idolatry. And no otherwise can the worship, or paying of divine honour to the Son or Messiah, (already proved,) be excused from idolatry, than by acknowledging him to be the word of God, (as you yourselves have called him,) that is, one of the divine Persons in the Godhead. And this does avoid all notion of idolatry in the worship of him; and can

noways come under that prohibition of Deut. xiii. against worshipping of the false gods of the heathen. You lay not this to the charge of your own Talmud and rabbies, who give the same expositions of your scriptures as we do. And you know how many of them do think that a plurality of powers in the one nature of God is intimated in the very name of God, *Elohim*, which is the plural number; and in these texts, among many others of the Old Testament, Gen. i. 1, 26. iii. 22. xix. 24. Psalm xlv. 6, 7. lxviii. 18. cx. 1. Isaiah ix. 6. xlviii. 16. Jer. xxiii. 6. Micah x. 2. Zech. ii. 8, 9. iii. 2. xii. 10. Now may we not reason upon these texts as you have done, without imputation of polytheism? and so of the texts in the gospel? And when you come to embrace the gospel, (which God send,) we will reason with you, as with some amongst ourselves, upon what proofs are there, answerable to, and explanatory of, those texts in the Old Testament which favour the doctrine of the holy Trinity; and then, and not till then, will be the proper time to enter with you at large upon this controversy.

But what I have now said, I hope, will be sufficient to remove all scruple from you against the gospel, from that text of Deut. xiii.

And then that other text, Deut. xviii. 19. will look very terribly upon you, that whoever should not hearken to the Messiah, when he came, God would require it of him. And you feel it severely that God has required it.

3. But to put an end to this objection from Deut. xiii. the Jews have yielded it; if they will allow that learned Jew who disputed with Limborch to give their true sense; and that according to their

own Talmud before quoted, (tit. *de Synedrrio*,) which says, “that any command may be transgressed by “the command of a prophet,” i. e. who can work miracles to prove his mission.

And, says that learned Jew ^x, “if Christ, after he “rose from the dead, had publicly said to the whole “congregation of Israel, Hear, O Israel, I am the “Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land “of Egypt, and now have redeemed you from a “greater captivity of sin, whom you have sacrilegiously put to death: *absque dubio*, says he, without doubt, all Israel had believed even to this “present day. Nor had there been room left for “any doubt or suspicion.” Thus he; and he thereby yields that such a miracle as this would have convinced all the Jews to believe Christ, when he called himself God. And therefore he must grant that, notwithstanding of what is said, Deut. xiii. miracles are sufficient to vouch even the divinity of Christ. And then the dispute must only lie upon the miracles recorded in the gospel. For the truth of which I refer to what is said in the first part against the Deists.

XI. I would in this place call upon you to reflect, how very exact and particular God has been in fulfilling all the promises he has made unto your nation. One especially, which does confound the Deists, who call for ocular demonstration, and have it, to their astonishment, in seeing, at this day, the fulfilling of a most wonderful prophecy and promise made to your nation, so many ages past.

The Deists have made you, of all people, their re-

^x Limbor. Collat. p. 132.

proach, because you have been called *the peculiar people, the holy nation* chosen of God before all nations upon the earth: yet *ye were the fewest of all people.*

Deut. vii. 7.

And they called you the most inconsiderable and contemptible: and thence argue (in their bold and profane manner) the injustice and nonsense of God's preferring these to all the great nations and monarchies upon the earth.

They will not believe that God had more regard to the Jews than to any other people; or gave any prophecies concerning you. They say you coined those prophecies after the facts they speak of. But they demand the fulfilling of a prophecy, which they may see. And this that I speak of is obvious to the eyes of all the world; it is recorded, Jer. xlvi. 28. *Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not utterly cut thee off.* You will find the same, ch. xxx. 11. And ch. xxxi. 36, 37. it is written, *If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.* See the same repeated, chap. xxxiii. 24, 25, 26. and confirmed, Isai. xxvii. 7. xxix. 7, 8. liv. 9, 10. lxxv. 8. Ezek. vi. 8. xi. 16. xii. 15, 16. Amos ix. 8, 9. Zech. x. 9. And this was pursuant to what was promised in the law, Lev. xxvi. 44. Deut. iv. 31, &c.

Now let us see how literally this is fulfilled at this day. The great and famous monarchies, who in their turns governed the world, and successively had destroyed the Jews, (the Assyrian, the Babylonian, and the Roman,) are all vanished as a dream; there is not one of them left: their very names are lost in the earth. But your nation, though *sifted among all nations*, (as your prophet Amos expresses it in the place above quoted,) *like as corn is sifted in a sieve*, yet are you preserved a visible distinct people, in all the nations whither you have been scattered. And the rage of many kings and governments have been let loose against you, to root you off from the face of the earth, and you had no helper; yet the Lord was your helper, and put it out of the power of all the earth (though without any visible opposition) to infringe the promise he had made to you.

The Deists dare not say that these prophecies were made yesterday, or not before the fall of these monarchies, especially of the Roman, the greatest of them. And what a folly, as well as vanity, had it been in the Jews to have forged such audacious and provoking prophecies, to have thus dared all the powers of the earth to extirpate them, who hated them, and had them perfectly at mercy!

And here let the Deist take notice of this wonderful instance, fresh before their eyes, of God's particular regard to this most despised and contemptible people (in their account) above all the other nations of the earth, how great and honourable soever: this is a standing miracle exhibited to the whole world.

Yet is there no partiality in this, as the Deists weakly reason; for as Moses was a type of the Mes-

siah, so the church of the Jews was of the Christian, whose pales are enlarged to take in the Gentiles, as often promised in your prophets: by which means your nation was indeed a type of the whole world, (represented in the long garment of the high priest, Wisd. xviii. 24. by Israel called *the firstfruits of God's increase*, Jer. ii. 3.) And consequently the blessings of which the Jews partook, the promises made to them, and miraculous protection over them, was taking possession in the name, and securing the reversion, of the Gentile world in the same glorious inheritance. And it was indifferent as to the good of the world which nation had been pitched upon as their type: but God chose the least, that his power and protection over his church might be more visible; and to shew that she must struggle through many difficulties and temptations; yet never be extinct (though often distressed) when all the powers and glory of this world shall vanish as smoke before the wind.

Moreover, if God had chosen any of the great and powerful nations of the earth for his peculiar people, to whom if he had given his promise to continue them for ever, the scorers would have blasphemed, and said, that God was still on the strongest side: and they would have ascribed their preservation to their own power and greatness. This

Dent. vii. 7.
viii. 17.

is the reason God gives why he chose *the fewest of all people*, lest they should say it was through their own power and might that they were preserved: besides, the peculiar nation being (as before has been said) a type of the Christian church, it was necessary that the odds, as to the world, should be against that nation, which should subsist not by

worldly strength and politics, but by signal and miraculous providences. Thus the church was best represented as greatly distressed, but wonderfully preserved.

And here, O ye Jews, behold an equal promise of our Messiah to his church, and as miraculously fulfilled, as that before mentioned to yours! He promised, as before quoted, that his church should continue *even unto the end of the world*; that he would be all that time with her, to preserve her, and that the gates of hell should never prevail against her. And when was this promised? Even at the beginning, when his religion was low and contemptible, hardly yet known in the world. And the Devil has been let loose (as against Job) to spare only her life; all things else have been put in his power: all the rage and madness of kings and states and mobs have been exerted against her to destroy her, for many ages together: and she was destitute of all human help; nay it was made unlawful for her to help herself, or take arms in her own defence, against her persecuting kings, as it was not permitted to you, though an army of six hundred thousand men harnessed, besides a great mixed multitude, against Pharaoh, Ahasuerus, &c. But she was commanded, as you, only to *stand still, and see the salvation of God*; yet still she insisted upon the promise of her preservation made to her by her Messiah; nay more, of her victory at last over all these her enemies; and boasted of it before them, while they were worrying of her without control; and told them, that it was not in their power to destroy her. Yet all this notwithstanding, how miraculously did our Jesus perform his promise, in his

Exod. xii.

37, 38.
xiii. 18.

Ch. xiv. 13,

14.

now almost seventeen hundred years preserving and supporting her under all her persecutions, and giving her victory and triumph! And she still trusts in that promise, that it can never fail. Could any power less than divine have foretold this preservation, and have effected it for so long a time without human means, without sword or policy? This is not the least of the miracles which God has shewn, as to you, so to us, in these promises so full of wonder, so visibly fulfilled, and now every day fulfilling. And this is not a mean argument to join you to us, when you see the same God working so wonderfully for you and for us, for us only of all the whole earth; none of whom can boast such promises, and such performance, so uncontestably true, and so truly miraculous. Therefore I beseech you to hearken at last to the wise reasoning of your own Gamaliel, *lest ye be found fighters against God. For if this work had not been of God, it could not have so stood.* You first spent your rage against this stone which your builders refused, and, as he foretold you, it has *grinded you to powder.* Will you not yet confess that *this is the Lord's doing*, and that it is *marvellous in your eyes?*

Acts v. 38,
39.

Matt. xxi.
42, 44.

And now, O ye people greatly beloved and grievously punished, did your God ever fail you in any promise that ever he made to you? You are, and have been many centuries, preserved only upon the almighty power that there is in his promise, too strong for all the armed legions of earth and hell, which have overthrown mighty empires, and every thing else but you, and his church represented by you. Believe it, your preservation since your return from Babylon has been greater than in it, in

Egypt, or in the wilderness. And can you imagine that he who has wrought so many miracles, and still continues them, lest any of his works should fall to the ground; can you think that his great promise of the Messiah, and the time of his coming, so particularly described, is come to nought? As to the time, you confess it has failed, if not fulfilled in our Jesus. And where the time (as of your seventy years' captivity, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. Jer. xxix. 10.) is named, there it is impossible that there should be a failure as to the time.

See how the promise made to you of your deliver-
ance out of Egypt was fulfilled, even to a day; and
how exactly your forty years in the wilderness an-
swered to the forty days of your spying out the
land. Nor did your many and repeated provoca-
tions all along that time put off God's promise one
day further. See then and consider how punctually
our Messiah's coming was according to the stated
times and ages prefixed, as it is set down in the first
chapter of our Gospel according to St. Matthew,
ver. 17. The generations from Abraham to David
fourteen generations; from David to the captivity
fourteen generations; and from the captivity to
Christ fourteen generations. God's fixed and deter-
minate times are not to be altered.

The time and place of the Messiah's coming, as
foretold in the prophets, is one of the surest marks
by which we must know him. To that end they
were so particularly set down: and if these fail, so
may all the rest.

How do you expect to know your Messiah
when he does come? He cannot vouch himself from
the time of his coming foretold by the prophets;

for that is past, and there is no other time prefixed.

Will he prove his mission by miracles? and will he shew greater than our Jesus has done? Can he fulfil the prophecies of the Messiah, by not coming at the time they have named, so much as our Messiah by fulfilling all the circumstances of the prophecies, as to time, place, &c.?

^a Isai. vii. XII. Born of a Virgin^a, of the seed of David^b, in
^{14.} the town of Bethlehem^c; within four hundred and
^b xi. 10. ninety years^d of the building of the second temple;
^c Mic. v. 2. before the sceptre had quite departed from Judah^e;
^d Dan. ix. 25. to whom the gathering of the Gentiles has been, as
^e Gen. xlix. 10. to their Messiah, as well as the Messiah of the
 Jews. This is an astonishing mark and notorious,
 and insisted upon over and over again in the pro-
^f Ps. ii. 8. phets^f; and of which none that ever took upon
 lxxii. 8, 11, them to be the Messiah, except only our Jesus, had
 17. cx. 2. the least shadow of a pretence. And consequential
 Isai. ii. 2. to this, that he should make the heathen nations
 xi. 10. xlix. forsake their idolatry^g, and destroy their idols. No
 6. lii. 15. nation of the heathen was ever brought to this by
 lv. 5. lx. 3. the law; but how many have by the gospel! By
 lxxv. 1. the way, you may see by this how unreasonable
 Zech. ix. 10. your exception is against our Messiah from Deut.
 Hos. ii. 23. xiii. as if he introduced the worship of heathen
^g Isai. ii. deities; which he only has effectually destroyed. He
 18, 20. only stopped the mouths of their oracles; which
 xxxi. 7. within a hundred years after his coming, were all
 Ezek. xxx. totally silenced in the reign of Trajan. He only
 13. Zech. deposited his flesh in the grave^h, in hope that it
 xiii. 1, 2. should not see corruption. *They gave him gall to
 eat, and vinegar to drinkⁱ. They pierced his hands
 and his feet; and cast lots upon his vesture^k. They*

^h Ps. xvi.
9, 10.

ⁱ lxi. 21.

^k xxii. 16,
13.

upbraided him in the same words foretold¹. His¹ Matt.
 very price was foretold^m, and how the money should^{xxvii. 43.}
 be disposed of; that *a bone of him should not be*^m Zech. xi.
*broken*ⁿ. Again, the particular manner of his rid-^{13. Matt.}
 ing into Jerusalem upon an ass^o; which your most^{xxvii. 6, 7.}
 learned Rabbi Saadia expounds of the Messiah; as^u Exod. xii.
 also the second and hundred and tenth Psalms, and^{46. John}
 other scriptures before quoted. I could enlarge upon^{xix. 36.}
 this head, and shew many more particulars, wherein^v Zech. ix.
 our Jesus did and does exactly answer to the sever-^{9.}
 al marks given of the Messiah by the prophets.

Which is so strong an argument, so past all pos-
 sibility of cheat or contrivance, that the first of our
 apostles reckoned it even beyond miracles, or rather
 as the greatest of miracles, greater than those shewn
 to our outward eyes. For proving the mission of
 Jesus, from their being eyewitnesses of his majesty
 in his miraculous transfiguration; and the voice
 which then came to him from the excellent glory;
*which voice, says he, we heard, when we were with*² Pet. i. 18,
him in the holy mount; he adds as a yet further^{19.}
 proof, *We have a more sure word of prophecy;*
whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a
light that shineth in a dark place, until the day
dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. Pray
 God it may, and that he may open your under-^{Luke xxiv.}
 standing, as he did of his apostles, *that they might*^{45.}
understand the scriptures, that thus it is written,
and that thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to
rise from the dead the third day: and that repent-
ance and remission of sins should be preached in his
name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

All which you see fulfilled, yet you will not believe
 it! You see all fulfilled that he foretold so parti-^{Sec Ezek.}
^{xxi. 10, 13.}
^{Vulg. The}
^{sword that}

destroyed
Jerusalem,
called the
sceptre of
God's Son.

cularly of the destruction of Jerusalem; and that that age in which he spoke should not pass till it was fulfilled, though there was then no appearance of it.

XIII. What witchcraft then is it, what heavy judgment lies upon you, that you should harden your hearts against this Messiah, in expectation of another, in whom the prophecies of the Messiah can never meet (for the time is already past, as you yourselves confess) against this Messiah who shed his blood for you, who died praying for you, who offered up himself a sacrifice to purchase eternal redemption for you, which the blood of bulls and goats could never do! The very institution of sacrifices does declare that God would require satisfaction for the sins of men; and that without shedding of blood there could be no remission; not of blood less noble than our own; but of the great Messiah, of dignity and merit sufficient to make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. And now I appeal to yourselves, whether this scheme of God in Christ reconciling to himself lapsed humanity; and thus triumphing over all the powers and malice of that serpent the Devil, who seduced man into disobedience, be not more worthy of God; a demonstration of greater power and wisdom and goodness; and a more literal fulfilling of that first promise of the Messiah, than giving to any one nation (though it were your own) the conquest over your enemies, and a temporal reign upon earth?

Gen. iii. 15.

Yet this is the objection you have against your second Moses, as against the first. Where is *the inheritance of fields and vineyards* that was promised to us? You hanker after these poor perishing things,

Numb. xvi.
14.

and neglect your eternal inheritance, which was figured by them. You long more after an earthly than a heavenly Canaan; and for a little rest there, than a rest for ever. Therefore you reject our spiritual, and choose to yourselves an earthly and fighting Messiah: but you cannot have him. And God in mercy has turned you out of your beloved Canaan, and given it to the basest of men, to take off your minds from it, and to instruct you that that is not the end of the promise; and because you prefer it to the glorious purchase that our Messiah has made for us; which the angels desire to look into. But ye think *scorn of that pleasant land*, where there is everlasting victory, and triumph, and sabbath, and jubilee! O shut not your eyes wilfully against your own happiness! call it to mind, and shew yourselves men. Is not this a more exalted and rational completion and archetype of your law, than the tables for municipal statutes, to distinguish you of some short time from other people? If that be all the import (as you would have it) of the whole glorious dispensation to Moses: was this worth or proportionable to that astonishing appearance upon mount Sinai, and all that wonderful economy of miracles, by which your law was established? But if you will look (with us) to the end of your law, then you will see every tittle and iota of your law fulfilled, exalted, glorified in the heavenly reign of our Messiah, the second Adam; the innocent Isaac that was sacrificed; the Joseph that was sold by his brethren, for their future preservation; the Moses who delivers us out of Egypt, the slavery and thralldom of sin and hell, and conducts us safe through the wilderness, the temptations and distresses

of this wretched life; our Joshua, who opens our way into the heavenly Canaan through faith; in whose blessed passion and sacrifice for us, when lifted up upon the cross, like the brasen serpent in the wilderness, the mortal biting of our spiritual serpent the Devil is cured, and our souls eternally saved. These are the glorious things that were shewn to Moses in the mount; after which pattern

Exod. xxv. 40. he was commanded to frame the tabernacle, and all the institutions thereof, as types and shadows of those

Hab. ii. 4. things (*by faith* in which *the just shall live*) which were to be *perfected in the heavens*. And will you now reject the pattern for the types? Will you degrade your law, to mean nothing beyond the outward senses; nothing but what is visible and temporary; to have no spiritual and eternal signification? *Do we therefore make void the law? yea, we establish the law*: we carry it whither it was intended: we shew an eternal and heavenly light shining through it all, and every institution of it: we look with reverence and great veneration upon it, as the schoolmaster that was ordained to bring us unto Christ, as the ladder that was set to climb up into heaven. But you will not climb with us; you say that the top does not reach to heaven, therefore you stop short upon the lower steps. The patriarchal dispensation before the flood was one step; the Abrahamical another; the Mosaical another; and you still expect another, the last and most perfect under the Messiah: yet you reject it now it is come, and there is to be no other.

Be not afraid to lose your law or your prophets, you will hear them read every day in our churches; and their true and full import explained and ful-

filled in the gospel: for the gospel is the best comment upon the law, and the law is the best expositor of the gospel: they are like a pair of indentures, they answer in every part; their harmony is wonderful; and is of itself a conviction: no human contrivance could have reached it: there is a divine majesty and foresight in the answer of every ceremony and type to its completion: and there is one yet to be completed. O the glorious day when that shall come! that is, the grafting you in again to your own olive tree, the fatness, the sweet, the marrow of your law, fulfilled in the Messiah. For we do believe, *that blindness is happened to Israel but in part, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.* Rom. xi. 25, 26, &c. *And so that all Israel shall be saved: for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. God hath concluded all, us first, and then you, in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all; that the praise may be to God, and not to us; that no flesh should glory in his presence. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

XIV. But though the judgments of God are in themselves unsearchable, yet they generally move in the road of second causes: and so far it is lawful for us to look into them; and sometimes necessary in order to our duty, as being not only brought upon us for our sins, but continued by them: so that by discovering the causes, we may prevent or shorten our judgments.

Therefore I would here inquire a little into some

of those most visible causes which have all this time, and do still harden the Jews in their obstinacy against receiving the doctrine of Christ.

And some of these are on the Jews' side, and some on the Christians'.

I. First for the Jews. They have since Christ came quite altered their own doctrine and topics from whence they used to argue before, on purpose to avoid the plain proofs thence drawn for our Jesus being the Messiah. To instance in a few :

1. There are great presumptions, that they have altered and corrupted the very text of their own scriptures of the Old Testament, in those places which speak of the Messiah, which gave the marks of him, and pointed out the time of his coming. However, this they cannot deny, that whether by the loss of the vowels in the Hebrew tongue, or from whatever cause, that language is now rendered so uncertain, beyond any other in the world, as that one word bears many different significations, inso-much that every text almost will afford perpetual jangling: which has made some of your most learned rabbies complain that your scriptures are become, in the words of the prophet before quoted, as *a book sealed up* to you: and that the true sense of them will not be known till the coming of the Messiah, who will restore the vowels and right knowledge of the Hebrew tongue.

It is long since the Hebrew has ceased to be the vulgar language of your nation, and consequently to be well understood by the Jews themselves, who now learn it at schools, as other men do. Josephus complains of the loss of the Hebrew tongue among the Jews in his time, and it was so long before.

This occasioned that the Greek translation of the Seventy was publicly read in the Jewish synagogues many years before the coming of Christ.

This translation they thought to have been divinely inspired, and made great boasts of it; as you may read in Josephus, and many other of your authors: and it continued in this reputation with you, and was read in your synagogues till Christ came, and for about an hundred years after: then you rejected it because of the plain proofs that were brought out of it for our Jesus being the Messiah; and set up the spurious Greek translation of Aquila, who was an heathen, a Christian, and a Jew, which he then made when the Hebrew tongue was so greatly decayed from that purity which it confessedly retained when your seventy priests made that famous translation for Ptolemy king of Egypt, about three hundred years before Christ: and was never questioned by any of you, but held in the highest veneration all that time, till after the coming of our Saviour, because of the flagrant testimonies it bore to him: and were it now admitted, as it formerly was amongst you, and as it truly is, the best comment at least upon the Hebrew text, to determine the sense of it when the words are doubtful, and (because of the present defect in that language) of various and different significations; I say, if this were admitted, (which you cannot refuse, without casting reproach upon all your predecessors for three hundred years before Christ, who did admit it, and upon yourselves for so doing, and confessing that you have done it unreasonably,) you would not be able to maintain your hold against Christianity. Are not the quotations of your scriptures, which are in your

learned Philo, (who lived in the days of Christ and his apostles,) and of others your chief rabbies before that time, more according to the translation of the Seventy than of the Hebrew text, as you have it at present? And what reason can you give why you dare not quote that translation still? but because it renders the sense of the Hebrew so, as leads it directly upon our Saviour, and cannot be extended further; and it cuts off those vain and precarious excuses which you would draw from the present uncertainty of the Hebrew text. Yet none of your latter expositions can pretend to any authority equal to that of the Seventy, even yourselves being the judges. This shews that you are not disposed to find out the truth, but bent to shut the door against it.

2. As the Jews have thus manifestly stood out against the conviction of the holy scriptures, by inventing and using these arts to corrupt them, at least to hide and obscure their true meaning; so have they for the same reason, viz. in prejudice to our Messiah, altered their former principles and notions, which they had received by tradition from their fathers. Thus finding that the notion of the Λόγος, or Word of God, which was universally received amongst the Jews before Christ came, and largely insisted upon by Philo, that learned Jew, even in the apostolical age, that, as before has been noted, he was God, and yet a distinct person from God the Father of all; that he was Χαρακτήρ, the express image of God; the great Δύναμις, Instrument or Power by which God made the worlds; the Ἀρχιερεὺς, supreme archetypal High Priest and Mediator betwixt God and men; of whom the high priest

under the law was a type and figure, by outward communion with whom men were made capable of, and had a title to, the inward and spiritual communion with the Λόγος, and by him of reconciliation and acceptance with God. From this notion of the Λόγος, St. John disputes according to the received principles of that age: and having proved Christ to be the Λόγος, he, in his Gospel, Epistle, and Revelation, gives him the titles which were usually ascribed to the Λόγος, of Light, and Life, and Truth; and from having communion with him, infers that we have also communion with the Father. But the Jews finding that these principles led directly to the divinity of our Saviour, and all that is said of him in the gospel, presently forsook their own principles, and as early as Justin Martyr began to deny them: as Trypho the Jew did, and put Justin upon the proof of the Λόγος being a divine Person, &c. which he did out of Philo, and other approved authors of the Jews.

It is plain that the Jews thus understood it when they accused our Saviour of blasphemy, and of making himself God, because he called himself *the Son of God*: for they called themselves the sons of God, ^{John x. 33, 36.} in a large sense, as so adopted, and in federal covenant with God. But they knew it was the received notion among them, that the manner how the Λόγος was the Son or Word of God was natural, as proceeding from the nature of God; and that for any to call himself the son of God in this sense, was to make himself God: whence it is plain that they thought the Λόγος to be God.

3. The Jews finding that the mystical and primary sense of their law did refer to the Messiah, and

was most exactly and particularly fulfilled and completed in our Saviour; rather than be convinced by this, they have now (as the learned Jew that disputed with Limborch^y) denied that the law was typical, or referred to any more perfect state: the contrary of which is plainly intimated, Exod. xxv. 40. from whence our apostle convincingly argues, Heb. viii. 5. But the Jews now will have no type in the law or the office of the Messiah to extend beyond temporal conquests, to any spiritual or heavenly acquisitions; sticking in the bare letter of the law.

But Philo, and the Jews before him, did largely insist upon the mystical, which they made the principal end and intendment of the law: as indeed it is, and most apparently so, if we duly consider the law itself, and the prophets, who often mind us of it: and without which they cannot be verified, (as before is shewn,) and their meaning runs low and contemptible, no way answering the magnificence and glories which are there revealed.

Gen. xlvii. 9. Jacob confessed himself and his fathers to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth: whence our

Heb. xi. 14, 15, 16. apostle does argue very forcibly, *that they who say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.*

And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly. If the land of Canaan had been all their view, and they had understood the promise made to them of Canaan to have had no further meaning than the letter, only the temporal enjoyment of that pleasant country, they

^y Limbor. p. 62. et alibi.

needed not have wandered from it as they did; for *they might have had opportunity to have returned to it.*

When David was in possession, and king of it, he declared himself to be then in a pilgrimage, and a stranger in it. ^{1 Chron. xxix. 15.}

This shews they had a further prospect, and that they extended the promise made to them of Canaan, to mean principally and ultimately the heavenly Canaan; of which they understood the earthly Canaan only as a type: and if Canaan itself was a type, no doubt Jerusalem must be so too, and the temple with all the service of it, that is all your law.

Your Cabbala makes your outward law but the *cortex* or shell of the hidden mysteries that are contained in it.

Yet you are now grown to that violent prejudice against this, (though you would stick to your Cabbala too, and think it divinely inspired,) because it leads directly upon Christianity, that your learned Jew has set up this principle, *Quod cultus externus, ut talis, est interno multo perfectior*: and as a just consequence of this, *Quod externus non minus Deo gratus, quam internus*, i.e. "That the outward worship, as such, is more perfect than the internal;" and therefore, "That the outward worship is not less grateful to God than the internal:" these are the titles of his chapters. And the end of setting up these desperate positions is to obviate the Christian argument, that the inward and spiritual worship is chiefly regarded by God: and consequently the inward and spiritual meaning of the law is much pre-

² Limbor. Collat. n. xi. xii. p. 118, 120.

ferable to the letter and outward observances: that therefore there is a spiritual sense in the law, which exceeds the letter; or which is typified by it: that this is fulfilled in Christ, who has thereby consummated and perfected the law. To oppose this, the Jews are driven to that extremity, as here you see, to prefer the outward worship, as such, to the inward; contrary to the tenor of their own law and their prophets, where the inward circumcision of the heart is so often inculcated and preferred to that outward in the flesh: nay the outward institutions of the law, where the inward and spiritual meaning

Isai. i. 11—
21.

and intendment of them is not regarded, are declared to be hateful and abomination to God. The

Hos. vi. 6. inward is not only preferred, (*I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than*

Ps. xl. 6. *burnt offerings. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; but mine ears hast thou opened.*) but, in respect to the inward, the outward are said not to

Jer. vii. 22, 23. have been commanded by God; that is, they were commanded for the sake of the inward: and therefore, without respect to the inward, the outward were not commanded.

To rid you out of this perplexity, your learned Jew has advanced a strange sort of an argument to maintain his paradox before mentioned, of preferring the outward, as such, to the inward worship and sense of the law; where he explains his foresaid position thus, that the outward is not to be supposed without the inward: and that the outward, as including the inward, is preferable to the inward. But this, instead of solving the case, makes no case at all of it. It is no more than this, whether two be not more than one? whether both outward and inward

be not more than the inward alone? which nobody will dispute with him. But then this cuts off all comparison betwixt the outward and the inward: and consequently makes no sense of those texts before mentioned, and many others, where the same comparison is insisted upon. And when the Jew says that the outward, as such, is preferable, &c. what does he mean by *as such*? is it the outward as outward? which any one would take to be the meaning. But his meaning, as he explains it, is, the outward, as such, that is, as both outward and inward.

So very thin and contradictory are these strained excuses you have set up against the spiritual, which is the main and principal intendment of your law: because it cannot be fulfilled but only in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and his spiritual kingdom.

4. The modern Jews have, since Christ's time, gone away from the constant tradition of their fathers before Christ came, viz. that the Messiah would shew himself to the world, and vouch his John vii. commission by miracles; of which sufficient has ³¹ been said before. And this contrivance discovers plainly their guilt, that it is not conviction which they want, but that they are resolved not to be convinced.

5. They have not only departed from the traditions of their fathers; but they have invented new and strange conceits, of which their fathers, before Christ came, never dreamt. As of two Messiahs, the one a suffering, the other a triumphing Messiah: to answer these two states of suffering and triumphing, which were foretold of the Messiah,

and both fulfilled in our blessed Saviour. To avoid which, the Jews, since his time, have invented these two Messiahs. The Jews, in our Saviour's time, even the apostles themselves, till after his resurrection, had not the true notion of the sufferings of the Messiah, much less of his death: when he spoke of it, his disciples rebuked him, and understood nothing of it. And the Jews told him, *We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?* that is, crucified. They were looking out then, as you are now, for a temporal, fighting Messiah, who should *restore again the kingdom to Israel*. They thought not then of the sufferings of the Messiah: far less did they dream of two Messiahs; one to suffer, the other to conquer. You can shew no footstep of any such doctrine amongst the Jews before Christ came. And it shews the distress your latter rabbies were driven to, when they could find no shift, but so groundless and foolish an invention: which is of a piece with your other fulsome and ridiculous legends (before mentioned) of the Messiah's sitting these one thousand six hundred years amongst the lepers at the gates of Rome; that he is in paradise, but tied in a woman's hair that he cannot come; the mad and nonsensical stories of your behemoth and leviathan; of God's weeping when your city was destroyed; of his daily study in the reading of your law; and such other delirious fancies, as shew the greatness of your judgment, threatened 2 Thess. ii. 11. and visibly fulfilled upon you, more than upon any people, God sending *you strong delusion, that you should believe* such monstrous, and even contradictory *lies; because you re-*

Matt. xvi.

22.

Luke xviii.

34.

John xii.

34.

Acts i. 6.

Luke xxiv.

26.

ceived not the truth, that ye might be saved; but had pleasure in unrighteousness, in such rabbinical and shameless fopperies, they deserved not to be called forgeries, on purpose to elude the infallible demonstrations which our Jesus gave of his being the Messiah. These are the great though pitiful obstacles, on the Jews' side, which hinder their embracing of Christianity.

II. I come now to other obstacles which lie on the Christians' side.

First, The learned Jew that disputes with Limborch^a complains of the great scandal given to the Jews in the popish countries.

1. By the idolatry which they see practised there. They cannot bear to see the great God painted like an old man in their churches and mass-books, in their shops and houses, and publicly sold by allowance: this they take to be the sin so strictly prohibited, Deut. iv. 15, 16. and in many other scriptures: besides their worshipping of saints, angels, &c. See Sandys's *Speculum Europæ*.

2. There is another strange sort of impediment which the Jews have met with in popish countries; that is, that if any of them turned Christians, they forfeited all their estates, on pretence that they or their ancestors had got them by usury. Of this several good men in the church of Rome have complained; as Bradwardinus, lib. I. *de Causa Dei*, cap. 1. coroll. par. 32. *Cardinalis a S. Severina in Catechismo generali pro Catechum.* cap. 20. Gasparus Belga a Jesuit, in *Epist. Ormutina (est inter Epistolas Indicas)* wrote an. 1549. speaking of one

^a Limbor. Collat. p. 102.

Rabbi Solomon, who desired baptism, says, that he and many others would have embraced Christianity if it had not been for that law amongst the Christians, that they should be obliged to restore whatever they had got by usury. This I have taken out of Hornbeck *contra Judæos*, Lugdun. Batav. an. 1655. in *Prolegom.* p. 31. where he cites more authorities; as of Joh. Gerson apud Bochellum, tit. *de Judæis*, and amongst us, Edwin Sandys, *de Statu Relig.* cap. 41. Georgius Theodorus, *de Statu Judæorum in Repub. Christian.* cap. 9. He says that this custom was taken away by a particular bull of pope Paul III. by the council of Basil, sess. 19. and of Lateran, under Alexander III. c. 26. How it is at this day at Rome, in Spain, Portugal, and other popish countries, I cannot tell; but sir Edwin Sandys in his book before quoted, wrote an. 1599, says, that when he was in Italy the same forfeitures were still exacted of the Jewish converts, except where the pope gave dispensation; which he knew was granted only to some few physicians, their gains not being supposed as got by usury: but it stopped the conversion of others.

Secondly, I come now to the reformed churches, where the Jews meet with neither of the forementioned impediments: but whether many of the Jews do come out of the popish countries, as the learned Jew confesses to Limborch, on purpose to avoid the idolatry in the church of Rome, to which many of them are forced to comply, to save their lives or estates; and others are tempted to it, and counterfeit Christianity for the sake of preferments, especially in Spain and Portugal, as before has been told; and whence many of them do fly into Holland,

where there is universal liberty of conscience, and that they may profess and practise their Judaism openly; this has brought so many of them into Holland, more than to other of the countries reformed.

1. But there is another sort of impediment which they meet with there, that is, the various sects which are tolerated, and owned as churches, though most opposite and contradictory to one another. This goes violently athwart the fixed and stated principle of the *segullah*, or *peculium*, which God delivered to the Jews from the beginning, and implies the true notion of a church, as being a *peculium* or select society, gathered from amongst the rest of mankind; under governors and laws, with promises and privileges of their own, peculiar to themselves, and independent of all others upon the earth. Now the Jews cannot think this *segullah* transferred to a Christian church, where there is no notion of any *segullah* at all; or such a lame one, as admits and excludes nobody: a park without pales! which reduces the church from a society to a sect, only to believe such things, without being subject to the governors or laws of the society, without any principle of unity: a church without a bishop! a body without a head! This latitudinarian no-principle is so perfectly adverse to the received notion of the Jews all along, that they can as easily believe no faith as no church: and can never think their faith terminated or fulfilled in that church, whose constitution is not framed alike to theirs: for how otherwise was theirs a type of ours? A *type* is so called from its likeness to what it does represent: and what resemblance is there betwixt the church in Jerusalem, under one high priest; and in Holland,

where episcopacy, of which that was the image, is abolished? What agreement betwixt the temple, into which none were admitted but proselytes to the constitution as well as faith of the Jews, and that church whose doors are open to all comers and goers; which has no communion by admitting of all communions, and makes no communion necessary? How was the one altar of the Jewish church a type of altar against altar in every parish? Of one hundred opposite altars, that is, communions, at Amsterdam, yet all acknowledged to belong to the Christian church? It is true, opposite communions may agree in many things, as all do in some things; but how they can be called one church, is as difficult for a Jew to apprehend as a church without a communion, that is, a society which has no society. A church, and not a *peculium*, is an open enclosure: and a society without government is as great a contradiction. And other government than monarchical in the church the Jews never understood, nor did God ever appoint: not that all churches in the world should have one visible and universal head upon earth, more than all the kingdoms of the earth are to have one universal monarch under God; to whom the whole world is one kingdom, though composed of many different and independent kingdoms: as the one catholic church may consist of many independent churches, which all make one church to Christ. Of each of these under her own bishop, the church of the Jews at Jerusalem (being itself a particular church) was a type under her high priest: and as he was a type of Christ, the *Λόγος*, the archetypal and universal High Priest and Bishop of the catholic church; so the church of the Jews may be

called a type also of the universal church; as that nation was a type of the whole world, of which the high priest wore a representation as well as of the *segullah*, as before has been observed from Wisd. xviii. 24. For *God is king of all the earth*, though more especially of his church.

The miraculous performance of that promise of perpetuity which God made to the nation of the Jews has been discoursed before; but here I would take notice of one great means by which it has been brought to pass: which is, the strict notion that the Jews still retain of the *segullah*. Those many myriads of them who, at first, went over to Christianity, found as strict a notion of the *segullah* there; and saw how it was transferred, as from the beginning it was intended, from the *segullah* of Moses to that of the Messiah. It was indeed but the same church or *segullah* under different economies or dispensations. But those whose eyes were blinded that they saw not this, remained in their infidelity, and stuck to their old *segullah*: and God, who brings good out of evil, has made this a means, the great means, of keeping them a distinct people to this day. For should the Jews turn so much latitudinarians as to lose this notion of the *segullah*, and grow indifferent in their rites and customs; if they should intermarry with the nations whither they are scattered, and conform to their customs and manners; they would soon lose both their name and religion; and, by being mixed with the rest of the world, grow undistinguished from them, as a river when it is emptied into the ocean.

If it be objected, that then the aforesaid promise of God would be broken, of preserving them for

ever a distinct people; and, therefore, that this promise stands in the way against their conversion:

I answer, that it did not stand in the way against their conversion in the beginning of Christianity; for the Jews who then turned Christians did not at all, for that, lose their name or nation: and they were plainly distinguished from the converts of the Gentiles.

Acts vi. 1.
xxi. 25.

To make this more clearly understood, let us consider, that when Christ first sent forth his apostles, their commission was limited to the Jews only, in the strictest sense; *Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* Here the Samaritans, though Jews, are excluded because they were schismatics, and not strictly within the *segullah*. And thus it continued all Christ's lifetime: the gospel went not without the pale of the *segullah*. After Christ's resurrection, then he extended their commission further, and bade them go and preach *among all nations*, but still *beginning at Jerusalem*: to shew that there the Christian *segullah* was first established, and derived from thence, as from the root, to spread among all nations. But it appears not that the apostles, even long after that time, understood the full extent of this their commission: for till the vision of the sheet Peter himself did not know that the Gentiles were capable of being admitted into the Christian *segullah*: of which he was convinced by a great miracle then shewn in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius, &c. which satisfied the rest of the church who contended with him for his preaching to the Gentiles. So that till this time the Christian

Matt. x. 5,
6.

Luke xxiv.
47.

Acts x.

Acts xi.

segullah consisted of none but of the Jews only: into which the Gentile proselytes were afterwards admitted, even as into the Jewish *segullah* under the law. Christ foretold the future calling of the Gentiles: *Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice*, said Christ to the Jews: and signified to them, that the Gentile converts should at last be made equal to them, and in some respects be preferred before them, in that parable of those called at the eleventh hour; and that the first called should be last, and the last first. He shewed likewise that his mercy extended even to the Gentiles, by his compassion to the woman of Canaan: but at the same time he asserted the prerogative of the *segullah*, or church of the Jews: whom he calls *the children*, in comparison of whom the Gentiles were but *dogs*, (as it is expressed, Rev. xxii. 15.) that is, out of the *segullah*: *I am not sent*, said Christ to her, *but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*; that is, the *segullah* was to be set up only with them to whom only he himself preached: the Gentiles were to come in only as proselytes to the Jews: and that not by the ministry of Jesus himself, but only of his apostles, after his ascension. In all things the preference was given to the Jews: and the Christian *segullah* was first fixed amongst them. They are *the natural branches: theirs is Christ*, the apostles and first Christian church. And we freely confess, as our blessed Lord has taught us, that *salvation is of the Jews*. He revealed not himself to the Gentiles, he would not answer a word to Herod or Pontius Pilate: but he declared himself expressly to your high priest and sanhedrin. He did good to all, even

John x. 16.

Matt. xx.

Matt. xv.
26.

Rom. xi.
24.

John iv. 22.

Luke xxiii.

9.
Matt.

xxvii. 14.
xxvi. 64.

to the Gentiles, and *healed their sick*; his mercy is over all his works; but much more eminently to his church, his *segullah*. The *children's meat* is reserved only for them; there only it is to be had: therefore all are invited to go thither for it. All are capable of being adopted children by their admission into the *segullah*: and the children who forsake it, or are justly turned out of it, fall to the condition of dogs, *for without are dogs*.

The twelve apostles were chosen with respect to the *segullah* of the twelve tribes. Our Saviour himself makes the allusion, when he said to them, *Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. And the names of the twelve tribes are described as written upon the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem; and, answering thereunto, the names of the twelve apostles upon the twelve foundations. Then the calling of the Gentiles after the Jews, was in the like manner signified in the number of the Seventy, whom our Lord ordained some time after the apostles. For the Jews divided the world into seventy nations; there being just so many sons of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, recorded in the tenth of Genesis, who are said to be divided after their tongues and after their nations. Thence the Jews conclude that there were seventy nations and seventy languages, the languages distinguishing the nations, because each sorted to those of his own language; and so those of each language made a distinct nation. It would be hard otherwise to conjecture how the world should be divided into several nations, without such a force and necessity put upon them, and leading them, I may say, irresistibly into it by the miraculous division of lan-

Matt. xix.
28.

Rev. xxi.
12, 14.

Luke x. 1.

guages. For we cannot very easily suppose that the whole world should meet together to canton it out into several nations, by a free and equal vote, and to number out who and how many should belong to each nation, and to name all the kings or governors of each nation, as it is done in the tenth of Genesis.

Now the Jews believe that this division of the world into seventy nations, was done by God with a particular respect to his *segullah* to be afterwards set up in Israel; whose sons, that descended with him into Egypt, are recorded, Gen. xlv. and are just seventy. They think this to be intimated, Deut. xxxii. 8. where it is said, *When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel:* and ver. 7. shews this to have been a tradition of the Jews in the days of Moses.

Therefore as our blessed Saviour sent out at first twelve apostles, with respect to the twelve tribes, and limited them to preach to none other: so did he afterwards appoint other seventy also, with respect to the other nations of the world, who were, in time, to be brought into the *segullah*. And it is observable, that in the commission given to the seventy, Luke x. there is no such restriction as is given to the twelve, Matth. x. 5. of not going to the Gentiles, or Samaritans. Though the door was not fully opened to the Gentiles till the vision of the sheet, Acts x. as before has been said.

After this, the Gentiles came in abundantly to the *segullah*. But the first Christian church was wholly of the Jews, and established in Jerusalem; whose bishop did answer to the high priest; and was the

Acts xv.

principle of unity to the Christian Jews, as the high priest was to the other. So that the *segullah* was preserved entire, only transferred from the Jewish high priest to the Jewish bishop. It was not the Gentiles who converted the Jews to Christianity, but the Jews converted the Gentiles; and the Gentiles came into the Christian Jewish church, and appealed to it upon all occasions: and thus it continued till after the destruction of Jerusalem. But the name of Jews seems to have been appropriated to the infidel Jews upon their many and notorious rebellions, under their several false Messiahs; in which the Christian Jews were not concerned, nor in the punishments and odium which thereupon followed, nor in the laws that were made against the Jews; and so, by degrees, came to lose the name of Jews, and become undistinguished from the Gentile Christians: for then the name of Jew grew by custom to be a discrimination of religion, and not only of a nation: so that when a Jew now turns a Christian, he is no longer called a Jew.

Rom. ix. 4,
5.

But when the time shall come (God send) that there will be a general conversion of the Jews, then there will be no reason to take from them the name of Jews; that name will then only distinguish their nation. And it will then, no doubt, be the most honourable of any upon the earth: *to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came.*

Then it will no longer be thought a reproach in Spain and Portugal to own that they are (as before has been quoted from the learned Jew) descended

of the race of the Jews; and to take that name upon themselves. And other nations will strive for the same privilege. Then may be fulfilled, even literally, what is written, *One shall say, I am the Lord's*; Isa. xliv. 5. *and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.* And thus the name and nation of the Jews will be magnified and exalted above all that are upon the face of the earth; and perpetuated, according to the forementioned promise of God, while sun and moon shall endure. And then, when *the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in*, the Jews will be the head, and not the tail, and, as God has promised you, *thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be be-* Deut. xxviii. 13, *neath. And the Lord thy God shall set thee on high* 1. *above all the nations of the earth.*

Then shall the ten tribes appear; who now perhaps are the greatest monarchies upon earth; and then will be acknowledged as such.

See what a glorious state of your nation depends upon your conversion! And it may be more glorious than all this that I have said; even all that temporal grandeur and empire which you expect. Though, when all that is done, it comes infinitely short of the heavenly and eternal glories which our Messiah has purchased for us: and of which all these earthly greatnesses are, in their utmost extent, but faint types and shadows; and therefore far from the primary and ultimate intendment of the law; which is already fulfilled in the spiritual conquests and reign of our Messiah over all the powers of hell and death.

I take not upon me to determine, that the pre-

servation of the name and nation of the Jews, upon their conversion, will be just as I have said. But this we may depend upon, that the promise of God will be fulfilled; and that he will never want means to bring it to pass: and therefore that the conversion of the Jews will be no hinderance to the perpetuating of their name and nation, as he has promised.

And let their conversion begin (*cum bono Deo*) in this church and nation; where the good providence of God has prepared the way, by freeing you Jews here from those obstacles which obstruct your way in other Christian countries. Here you see no images or pictures of the great God in our churches; nothing in our worship which you can call idolatry or superstition^b. Here you may see an episcopacy, presbyters, and deacons, answerable to your high priest, priests, and Levites; and the *segullah* of the temple perpetuated and continued in the church; in which, as in the temple, and now in your synagogues, the public service and worship of God is celebrated in the vulgar language of the nation, with the solemnity and gravity of a well composed and digested liturgy. And, lastly, here are no forfeitures or mulcts upon you for your acknowledging and returning to your true Messiah; but you may reasonably presume, that all due encouragement will be given to you towards so glorious a change; and to convince you that we seek not yours but you. The Lord open your eyes.

2. Let me add, that you will be here free from another great scandal which you have met with more frequently in Holland, that is, Socinianism, to which some, that opposed you there, made too near

^b Hierom. ad Evagr.

approaches. And if they had converted you, it had not been to Christianity, but rather to idolatry, in paying divine honours and adoration to Christ while they suppose him but a creature^c. And they deny any to be Christians who refuse this divine adoration and invocation to Christ: whereby they have excluded all our English Unitarians (as the Socinians here call themselves) from being Christians, who deny this to Christ; though they sometimes (when they boast of their antiquity and universality) derive themselves from these transmarine Socinians, and pretend to be of one faith with them. But your learned Jew before mentioned argues against them, that Christ could not be the heavenly King unless he were God himself, (whatever the Socinians dream to the contrary,) because that no mere creature could be present and assist every where: *Non potest esse Rex cœlestis, nisi fuerit Deus ipse, (quidquid Sociniani contrarium somniverint,) etenim nulla pura creatura potest ubique assistere et providere*^d. This vast prejudice you will likewise avoid in the church of England, where these Socinian heresies, on both sides, are detested and exploded.

If you take scandal that such differences should be amongst those who call themselves Christians, remember that your Sadducees denied the resurrection, and both angels and spirits; which takes away^{Acts xxiii. 8.} the future state of heaven. And this you now believe, and make it a great article of your Creed^c, and say, that it was always the faith of the Jews; therefore you cannot object it against us, that there

^c Racov. Catech. sect. vi. c. 1.

^d Limbor. Collat. p. 69.

^c Ibid. p. 106.

should be divisions, even in fundamental points, and schisms amongst us; since there has been the same amongst yourselves, your Samaritans, Sadducees, &c. and you will not think that this hurts the truth to those who hold it.

III. There is yet one great and the master difficulty of all, that stops the way to your conversion, which I have reserved to consider by itself in this last place, because it is the foundation of all those that lie on your side: and which, if clearly removed, will complete your conversion so far as to leave you no other defence, but plain obstinacy. It is that loose and precarious account which you give of the ground and foundation of your faith, on purpose to avoid that demonstration which there is for the truth of the gospel, and, as said before, there is the same for the truth of the law: but you will rather quit that irrefragable and sure foundation, and lose the certainty of your law, than yield to the same or greater certainty that there is for the gospel: or otherwise you have not yet known the true foundation upon which you ought to stand.

For the learned Jew^f before mentioned establishes the faith of the Jews, not upon any grounds of certainty of which other men may judge besides the Jews, which are common to all men, and stand upon the general reason and conviction of mankind; but only upon the credit they are to give to their fathers; not as men, but as their fathers, and as they stand in that particular relation to them: for “God,” says he, “does not send us to the Gentiles, to ask “ of them; but bids us ask only of our fathers, and

^f Limborch, Collat. p. 130.

“ give full credit to them. And therefore,” continues he, “ if the tradition of our fathers told us the same “ of Moses as it does of Christ, that is, that those “ matters of fact which are written of him in the “ law were not so done as he there tells; we should “ as little believe Moses, or what he wrote, as we “ do the gospel; which we disbelieve for the same “ reason, viz. because our fathers tell us, that those “ things related in the gospel were not so done as “ is there related.”

Answ. 1. Your fathers have not told you so: they have confessed to the matters of fact recorded in the gospels. Nor can you deny them, without answering the first part of this Discourse, and joining with the Deists against all revelations whatsoever, as well those made to Moses, as those given by Christ. Your fathers indeed said, that Christ wrought wonderful works by the power of Beelzebub; but that is confessing to the matter of fact; and may be objected against the miracles of Moses, or any other whatsoever: which is before considered, p. 57.

But as your fathers who believed not in Christ, when he came, could not, nor did they deny the matters of fact of Christ; and so give the strongest sort of evidence, that of enemies, to the truth of them; and consequently to the truth of his doctrine, which they were brought to vouch: so, as before is told, p. 134. many myriads of your fathers did embrace his doctrine; and, by the computation there made, there must be many more myriads of their posterities than of the infidel Jews. So that here the question is not betwixt the tradition of your fathers and of the Gentiles, but of those of your

fathers who did believe, and those who did not believe in Christ. For Christianity is nothing else but a tradition of the Jews, to which the Gentiles did come in: for, as shewn before, the first Christian church was wholly Jewish, without any mixture of the Gentiles for a considerable time.

Now then, since you have the tradition of your fathers on both sides, what method are you to take? What method did you take in the contrary traditions of the ten tribes, which grew among them in succeeding ages, after their defection to idolatry under Jeroboam? Your learned Jew^s gives a good rule, viz. to recur to the original pretended of each tradition, and there see upon what foundation it began. That of Moses was grounded upon miracles exhibited before all the people: not so of Jeroboam, who pretended to no such thing; only to give a different exposition of the law of Moses, to countenance his idolatry; which exposition became in time a tradition to their posterities.

And this is exactly your case as to Christianity. Your fathers did at first embrace it upon the conviction of those many miracles shewn publicly before their faces; but those of your fathers who did not believe, did not deny the matters of fact, only put a different construction upon them, saying that they were wrought by Beelzebub.

And those Jews who believed, and their posterities, are many more (as before shewn) than those Jews who remained in their infidelity; if that were an argument: for the tradition of two tribes was true, and that of ten was false. Therefore we

must recur to the original, and that must determine the tradition on either side. And the argument insisted upon in the first part against the Deists stands wholly and irrefragably on our side; and besides has the tradition of all your fathers, so far as to acknowledge the matters of fact, (which in consequence is the whole,) and the major number were convinced by them: or if not the major number then, yet certainly much more so now in their posterities; having, by the miraculous providence of God, escaped the dreadful destruction at Jerusalem, and under your several false Messiahs, which pursued those of your fathers only who hardened themselves in their obstinacy against Christ. So that the tradition of your fathers does not lie in your way, to prejudice you against Christianity; the most it can oblige you to is to examine the several traditions of your fathers, and that is it to which we would invite you. Consider then first the tradition of your Christian fathers, who call themselves by the name of their Messiah, as you have done by the names of your fathers, Heber, and Israel, and Judah: and this was foretold by the prophet, *Thou shalt be* Isa. lxii. 3. *called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.* Therefore though these your fathers have lost the name of Jews, yet they may say in the words of the same prophet, *Doubtless thou art our* Isa. lxiii. *father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and* 16. *Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our father, our redeemer, thy name is from everlasting.* This is an everlasting name by which they are now called, even the name of our God; whereas they were heretofore called only by the name of your fathers in the flesh, but now of your Father in heaven.

Consider, I say, the tradition of these your Christian fathers, that it is on the affirmative side; whereas the tradition of your unbelieving fathers is altogether upon the negative, particularly in that great article of our faith the resurrection of Christ: which being done in the sight only of a few soldiers who were capable of being bribed, you trust wholly to their no-evidence, that *his disciples stole him away while they slept*. For how could they know this, if they were asleep? yet this is all the foundation you have for your negative. But for the affirmative there were *many infallible proofs*, Christ *being seen of his disciples forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part, says our apostle, remain unto this present*, when he wrote. These were too many to be bribed, not with large money, as you gave to the soldiers, but with stripes and imprisonments and death, to have concealed such a forgery; when any one of them might not only have avoided these persecutions, but, no doubt, have got much more large money than you gave to the soldiers for such a foolish excuse as they made: for any one of these five hundred could have effectually discovered the contrivance, if it was one, and stifled Christianity in its cradle: and one evidence on that side would at that time have borne down five hundred on the other. And the Christians putting you to the trial of this, when these many witnesses were alive; and that not one of them could be tampered with either by bribes or threats! that all should stand it out even unto death!

Acts i. 3.

1 Cor. xv.
5—8.Matt.
xxviii. 12.

But we have surer evidence than all this, even infallible. And that is, the many miracles which the apostles shewed in attestation to the truth of this: miracles as flagrant and notorious as those which Christ himself had wrought; and which have all the four marks before mentioned that do infallibly demonstrate the truth of any matter of fact.

These are the grounds of the tradition of your Christian fathers.

And all the ground for the tradition of your unbelieving fathers is nothing else but that senseless story of the soldiers, sufficiently ridiculous to confute itself, were there no evidence at all on the other side.

Let me add to this, that your Christian fathers had all these difficulties to struggle with, which do now keep you back from Christianity; they hung as much as you upon the expectation of a temporal kingdom of the Messiah. The very apostles of our Lord were not wrought off of this all the time that he lived with them; and they resumed their hopes of it after his resurrection. They were ignorant of Acts i. 6. his resurrection: *For as yet they knew not the scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead.* John xx. 9. And so far were they from concerting of this, that they would not believe it when it was first told them by those who had seen it: *their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.* Luke xxiv. 11. And when all the other apostles had seen the Lord, yet would not Thomas believe even them, till he had more than even ocular demonstration, to *thrust his hand into his side, and put his finger into the print of the nails.* John xx. 25, 27. Nor was this peculiar to Thomas; for when Christ appeared first to the rest, they were as

Luke xxiv.
39—49.

hard to believe: and he afforded them the like demonstration, not only to see and hear him speak to them, but to handle him, and examine the wounds in his hands and feet, and further, to eat before them. And, as a yet more forcible conviction, he minded them how he had told them all this before; and that it was agreeable to the scriptures of the Old Testament; *And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.* Our blessed Lord suffered his disciples to be thus slow in believing, thereby to confirm our faith the more: but he would not permit them to proceed upon their mission, notwithstanding of all this evidence, till they should have yet further credentials, such as no man could refuse without the highest obstinacy, and which is the utmost that God can outwardly exhibit, that is, the power of miracles: *But tarry ye,* says he, *in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* And this was granted them at first by a most stupendous miracle, in the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, inspiring them, in an instant, with all languages: which was visible, not only to the Jews, but to mul-

Acts ii. 4 1. titudes of other nations then at Jerusalem: *and the*

same day about three thousand were converted. And by the many miracles which the apostles were enabled to work afterwards, many μυριάδες, myriads ^{Acts xxi. 20.} of the Jews, *and a great company of your priests,* ^{vi. 7.} *were obedient to the faith.* These were your fathers; therefore reject not their tradition. Compare with this the tradition of your other fathers, who believed not; which is built only upon a negative, of which there is no proof at all.

Then I desire you to recollect what has been said before, from p. 172. to p. 176. of your having forsaken the constant tradition of your fathers, before Christ came, in so many particulars as are there set down; and having invented new and contrary traditions on purpose to prejudice yourselves against Christianity. See likewise before, sect. iv. p. 103.

And if traditions must take place, why not the most ancient? these sure are most authentic; and they are more traditions than the latter; for it is age that makes tradition: yet you reject the most ancient traditions of your fathers, while you set up their tradition as your only infallible rule!

This is the first answer I give to your objection of following the tradition of your fathers, upon which you lay so great a stress; and which being removed, you will have little left to say. But though I think this answer very sufficient, yet because this is the main hinge of the controversy, as your learned Jew has stated it, and insists mightily, and almost solely upon it through all his dispute with Limborch; and thence we may reasonably suppose that it is the *jugulum causæ*, the last effort you have to defend yourselves; I will therefore proceed upon it, even as stated by yourselves, and shew further the

weakness of it, supposing that none of your fathers had embraced Christianity.

Answ. 2. This, as stated by yourselves, is running into that circle in which the church of Rome have entangled themselves, of proving the authority of the church by the scriptures, and the authority of the scriptures from the church: which cannot be avoided while, in this dispute, they consider the church as exercising any act of authority; for that authority must be proved before it can be acknowledged: and if it be proved from the scripture, and the scripture receives its authority from the church, then the authority of the church is proved only from the authority of the church.

But if the church be brought herein only as a witness, with the rest of mankind, upon the common reason and principles of mankind; the assurance of the senses of mankind, and the infallible manner of deducing matters of fact from former ages, and distinguishing the true from the false, and those which are certainly true from those which only may be true; (which is the method taken in the first part of this Discourse;) then the authority of the holy scriptures, and the facts therein contained, being established upon the common principles of mankind, the church may justly build her authority upon what she finds given to her in the holy scriptures.

And thus may you justly argue from what you find attributed to your church by the law; having first vouched the truth of the matters of fact of Moses, as delivered in your law, from the notoriety of the facts, and the impossibility of any imposture therein, as is done in the first part.

But if, as this your learned Jew does, you ground the truth of Moses himself and all that is said of him in your law, and consequently of the law itself, upon that credit only which your law bids you to have to your fathers, as being your fathers; you give up the whole cause, you run into the circle of believing the law for your fathers, and your fathers for the law, which is proving the same thing by itself.

Answ. 3. Your Samaritans vouched the tradition of your fathers and theirs against you: *Our fathers* John iv. 20. *worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.*

Your ten tribes did vouch likewise the tradition Jer. xi. 14. of their fathers for their idolatries and many vile abominations; nay even the two tribes in their captivity vouched the same; *We will burn incense unto* Jer. xlv. *the queen of heaven, and pour out drink offerings* ¹⁷ *unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem.*

If you say that they deviated in this from the law; and that in this case we must have recourse to the first giving of the law, and the ocular evidence that was then shewn to all the people of its being sent to them from God, as has been before quoted from your learned Jew; I answer, that this is still appealing from the tradition of your fathers, and shews that there is something else to be looked to; this is owning that there may be a corrupt tradition of your fathers.

And therefore though the Jews were bidden to learn these things from their fathers, who had seen

them, (there was all the reason in the world for it, for they could learn them from none other,) yet the assurance and credibility of what their fathers had seen was not grounded upon that relation in which they stood to them, as being their fathers; but as their fathers were men, and as such could not be deceived in what they saw and heard: and the assurance of that tradition by which these facts were conveyed to after-ages, was not solely grounded upon the kindness and affection of their fathers, who cannot be supposed willing to impose upon their posterities, as this learned Jew does argue; but upon the nature of the tradition, which was incapable of any imposture, as has been argued in the first part.

For other men will pretend to the same kindness towards their children as the Jews; and men that are deceived themselves, will transmit their deceits to their children: thus all errors are continued. Therefore we must recur to the original, and there examine the truth upon the common principles of mankind; and see how this has been transmitted to us; and bring the nature of the tradition to the standard of the same common principles.

But if the Jews will stick to the tradition of their fathers as the ultimate rule, from which there is to be no appeal, then they must stick to all their traditions, right or wrong: for if they pretend to any rule whereby to judge of their traditions, then their traditions are not the ultimate rule.

And it is strange to see how far this false notion has carried the Jews, even to acknowledge no other certain proof of the being of a God but the law of Moses; nor any other for that but the tradition of their fathers, which I come next to insist upon.

Answ. 4. This foundation which the Jews have given of their faith can never convert any other people to their religion; because others have the same deference for their fathers, as the Jews have for theirs; and the Jews can give no reason for the contrary. Therefore the Jews insisting only upon the tradition of their fathers, without further proof, give the same liberty to all in whatsoever they have received from their fathers.

This our learned Jew confesses: for, being pressed by Limborch to shew what arguments the Jews have against the heathen, he freely owns that they have none at all; and bestows a whole chapter to prove it^h. That the Jews can only dispute with the Christians, who acknowledge the books of Moses: for that the Jews have no other topic whereby to prove certainly even that there is a God; nor any other proofs for the books of Moses, than the tradition of their fathers, who they supposed would not deceive them; and because these books bid them hearken to their fathers, and not to the heathen. And if any should deny these books, says he, *est Atheus, quia non habet aliunde Dei existentiam certissime et indubitanter credat: quamvis ex aliis principiis possit probabiliter conjectari. Neque enim sufficit ratio, neque quod aliquis dixerit, de quo eadem fierit inquisitio. Hanc igitur convincere est impossibile, æque ac Dei existentiam ac Mosis prophetiam, per quam nobis unice constat esse Deum: i. e.* “He is an Atheist, because he has no
“other way whereby certainly to believe the exist-
“ence of a God: though from other principles it

^h Limbor. Collat. p. 136.

“ may probably be conjectured: for neither is rea-
 “ son sufficient, nor what any man says, of which
 “ the same inquisition is to be made. Therefore it
 “ is equally impossible to convince such a one, as
 “ well of the existence of a God, as of the prophecy
 “ of Moses; by which only it appears to us that
 “ there is a God.” This is mad work! for there
 could be no ground to believe Moses, but upon the
 supposition of the previous notion of a God who
 sent him; how else did his miracles vouch his being
 sent of God? And yet, says the Jew, by the pro-
 phesy of Moses only it appears to us that there is
 a God. And therefore he concludes, that as for a
 heathen who rejects both the law and the gospel,
ille neque ad legem Mosis, neque ad evangelium
solida ratione convinci quit: i. e. “ that he cannot
 “ be convinced by any solid reason of the truth
 “ either of the law of Moses, or of the gospel.” And
 therefore, that there is no disputing with such an
 one: *Contra ethnicum non oportet disputare*, is the
 title of this chapter; i. e. “ That we ought not to
 “ dispute against an heathen.” For this the Jew
 confesses freely, when being asked, “ If an heathen
 “ should deny that Moses was a prophet, only a
 “ cunning man who imposed upon the people, by
 “ what arguments the Jew could prove the divine
 “ mission of Moses, which would not as strongly
 “ prove the divine mission likewise of Christ?” *Re-*
spondeo, says he, *me nulla demonstratione Mosis*
prophetiam divinam esse, contra ethnicum probare
posse: quippe id demonstrabile non est: i. e. “ I
 “ answer, that I cannot prove by any demonstration
 “ against an heathen, that the prophecy of Moses is
 “ divine, because it is not demonstrable.”

And he says the same as to the Mahometans, that they have their tradition too, derived from their fathers, of the miracles and divine mission of Mahomet. And therefore that they can say to us, *Quod si Mahometi revelationem negaverimus, Mo- sis, etiam et Christi negare possunt, cum nullam rationem producere queamus, quæ suæ sectæ confirmationi non inserviat*: i. e. "That if we deny the "revelation of Mahomet, they may likewise deny "those of Moses and of Christ, seeing we can produce "no reason for them, that will not serve likewise for "the confirmation of their sect." And he grounds all upon this bottom, which he takes as granted; *Quod alicujus præteriti, nec etiam Dei, existentia ulla ratione demonstrari potest*: i. e. "That the ex- "istence of any thing that is past, or even of God, "cannot be demonstrated by any reason:" *ideo argumentum nequit esse cum ethnico*: that "therefore "there cannot be any argument against an hea- "then."

Now here I beseech you to consider how you have given up the whole foundation upon which the truth of your law does stand, lest you should be forced to submit to the truth of the gospel, which stands upon the same foundation. You have rendered your law wholly precarious, while you tell all the world that there is no reason to be given for it, that is, none to convince an heathen, a Mahometan, or any who denies it. For reason is reason to all the world; and nothing can be true, for which there is not a reason sufficient to convince gainsayers.

You have by this confirmed both heathens and Mahometans, as well as Christians, in what you think to be gross errors, and displeasing to God, by

allowing them the same foundation for their faith that you have for yours: i. e. the tradition of their fathers. And therefore you think that they have the same reason to stick to theirs as you have to stick to yours; which your learned Jew often confesses: speaking of the reasons produced on the Christian side, he says, *Et mea saltem sententia satis bonæ sunt et efficaces, ut Christiani eas amplectantur, et in sua fide roborentur: non vero ut Judæi Christiani fiant*ⁱ: i. e. “They are in my
 “opinion good reasons, and sufficient for the Christians to embrace them, and to be strengthened in
 “their faith: but not for the Jews, that they should
 “become Christians.” This is a strange sort of reasoning! for these reasons cannot be good reasons, unless they are true. And they cannot be true to one and false to another if they are rightly apprehended, unless the same reason can be both true and false. It is impossible that both Judaism and Christianity can be true; as impossible as that our Jesus is the Messiah, and that he is not the Messiah. And there can be no good reason for our believing him to be the Messiah, which must not operate as strongly for your believing of it. That is, if it be true, you ought to believe it; and if it be not true, we ought not to believe it. Therefore, your yielding that we have sufficient reason to believe it, must conclude inevitably against yourselves that you think it to be true; otherwise you could not think that we had sufficient reason to believe it.

If you say that this was a slip in that learned Jew, that he ought not to have made that concession,

ⁱ Limbor. Collat. p. 132. et alibi passim.

and that you are not bound by it; consider that this was all that was left him to say; that he has managed your cause with great subtilty; that he took this way to avoid answering the plain and undeniable reasons which prove the truth of the gospel; by yielding them to be such as to Christians, but that they are not the same as to the Jews: which turns the cause upon a new foot, and diverts the question.

But if you like not his management, and think you can make a better plea for yourselves; then you must answer the reasons given on the behalf of Christianity, particularly those urged in the first part against the Deists: and this is all that I desire to bring you to. And now you have your choice, whether you will do this, and put your cause upon this issue; or otherwise stick to that evasion which this learned Jew has made for you.

There is another thing I would ask you upon this head. You expect the conversion of all the world to your religion in the reign of your Messiah: and you have given this as one reason of your dispersion, that you might convert all nations, among whom you are scattered, as has been taken notice of before.

Now I would ask, how you are to convert them? you confess that there are no arguments to be used against them. You leave the Christians in full possession of their faith, and say, they have sufficient reason for it. And for heathens, &c. who do not acknowledge the books of Moses, you say they are not to be disputed with; how then are they to be converted by you?

Besides that your learned Jew complains, (see be-

fore, p. 130.) that the Jews are perverted to the idolatries and other corruptions of the nations where they live, instead of converting these nations.

But suppose that it will be otherwise when your Messiah comes, and that then, or some time before, you will begin to convert the nations; this conversion cannot be by arguments, for you confess you have none against them. How then? there is no other way but that of Mahomet, by the sword: and this is the way, it seems, that you expect. Your learned Jew says^k, that there is no other miracle needful for the Messiah, whereby to vouch his mission, but one only, viz. “To gather the Jews
“out of all countries of the world; to restore the
“throne of David to its ancient and a greater majesty; and to bring all kings and nations to the
“true worship of God; and to love and esteem the
“Jews; which,” says he, “would be such a miracle,
“and so notorious, as to leave no room to doubt of
“it.”

The uncertainty of this mark of your Messiah is shewn before, p. 117.

In the next place, this would be no greater a miracle than the successes of the Romans, and others, from a small beginning; or of Mahomet, who boasts the same, and to which every wickedness has a title, so it be prosperous enough.

Your Rabbi Menasseh (*de Resurrectione*, l. II. c. 21. as quoted by Hornbeck, *contr. Judæos*, l. II. c. 1. p. 114.) gives up this argument, and says, *Non est tantum miraculum*—That “it is not so great
“a miracle if the Messiah should conquer many
“nations and empires; since we see it often happen

^k Limbor. Collat. p. 55.

“that mean and abject men have arisen to kingdoms and empires, and become lords of many lands.” Yet this learned Jew, who writes later, is forced to come back again to this no-miracle; for they can find none other.

And in expectation of this, you reject all the true and indubitable miracles of our Messiah; and his much more miraculous conquests of the Gentile world, as well as of myriads of the Jews, without force of arms or any allurements to flesh and blood, but on the contrary, by inviting them to self-denial, sufferings, and death: which sure is a more extraordinary and more miraculous sort of conquest, and shews more of divine power, than what is performed by the arm of flesh, outward force, or sensual incitements, like that which you expect, and like that of Mahomet and other impostors.

But though you should conquer, as you expect, yet it will not follow that you will thereby convert all nations.

It is not in a man's own power to change his sentiments of things, without sufficient reason to convince him, at least what he thinks a sufficient reason; much less can such a force be put upon him by any other. No outward conquest can reach to the soul, or alter our judgment and understanding.

And therefore, according to what you now profess, that you have no argument on your side but your long expected conquest; it will not follow, if you obtained it to-morrow, that you should thereby convert any one man in the world to your religion; for perhaps there is not one man in the world that thinks conquest alone to be the true decision of controversies in religion: and if so, then every man

must think that religion to be false, which pretends to no other title but that of conquest.

See how inextricably you have involved yourselves on all sides, in those various shifts you have set up to harden yourselves against the flagrant truth of the Christian religion! You have thereby undermined the whole foundation upon which the truth of your law itself is demonstrable; and which you can never recover by any other means than those which establish the truth of our Jesus being the Messiah; which are the same that establish the truth of Moses, and (as has been said) are not compatible to any impostor whatsoever.

You pretend to us Christians that you have no arguments against the Deists or heathen. Why? because it is impossible for you to bring any arguments for the truth of Moses, which will not likewise demonstrate more strongly the truth of our Jesus. But to the heathen you say not so; you pretend to argue with them, when you can get out of sight of Christianity. Then you proceed freely upon the certain and indubitable proofs which you have for the truth of Moses, when you are not afraid that Christianity should come in at the same door: this appears in your book *Cosri*, (whether that story be real or feigned,) which contains your arguments against the heathen. But in the presence of Christianity they are all struck dumb, like the oracles among the heathen: not that the arguments for the truth of Moses are fallacious, like those oracles; but as their deceit was superseded by the brightness of the gospel, so are you stopped from daring to make use of the truth, because it makes against you: and you are forced to betray the cause of Moses while

you stand out against that of Christ. You cannot be true Jews or disciples of Moses till you turn Christians. Then you may (as we do freely) urge the absolute certainty of the revelation made to Moses: which now you dare not do, because the same topics prove as demonstrably the truth of Christianity; rather than admit of which, you have laid your foundation in the sand of your fathers' traditions, so explained, as to give you no advantage above all the traditionary fables of other nations; which you allow to have the same motives of credibility to them, as yours to you; and consequently to be as true as yours.

This was not the method you took to make proselytes before Christ came. Then you had free use of your arguments, and a success proportionable: but now you seem careless what becomes of your religion, so you can overthrow Christianity: therefore having chosen a false and insufficient foundation for your own faith, you would compliment ours with the same.

As your learned Jew does when he asks, "What reason there is why a heathen should believe any who preached to him the Christian faith, and miracles of Christ and his apostles¹?" The first part of this Discourse against the Deists is a direct answer to this question, and serves the Jews as well as the Deists: but this learned Jew did, and all the rest of you must think that question to be unanswerable: and as such it is here proposed. But then will not the question occur, what reason the Christians have to believe it? or the Jews to be-

¹ Limbor. Collat. p. 51.

lieve the law and miracles of Moses? Your learned Jew was aware of this; and therefore obviates it thus, *Neque par ratio est de Christianis et Judæis, qui interrupta traditione, &c.* That there was not the same reason for the belief of the Christians and the Jews, who received it by an uninterrupted tradition from their fathers. This puts the Christian faith upon as good a bottom as the Jewish, that is the same, viz. tradition from their fathers; and if they have no other, they both stand precariously, and have no more to say for themselves even than the heathen. This the learned Jew does not oppose, and therefore explains himself, that by his question he did not mean those heathens who had long since believed the gospel, and so received it by tradition from their fathers: *Sed quare nunc barbaræ gentes, in suis ritibus semper educatæ nostris traditionibus fidem præstabunt, eo solum quod a nobis proponantur?* i. e. “But why the now heathen nations, “who have always been educated in their own “rites, should embrace our traditions, merely because they are proposed to them by us?” Indeed, merely because they are proposed is a very bad reason; and yet it is all that the Jew thinks there is in the case, as before is shewn. But here he joins the Christian and the Jewish faith together, and makes both stand upon the same bottom; and that the same with the foundation even of the heathen religion: that rather than not overthrow Christianity, he would sink his own religion with it, and leave no true revealed religion in the world, (all others but these falsely pretending to it,) and so serve the ends of the Deists to all intents and purposes.

He endeavours to rivet this, as he thinks, se-

curely by the long tradition of the popish legends, which, he says^m, were believed by all Christendom for more than a thousand years, and no less faith given to them than to the gospel itself. His mistakes in reciting matter of fact I am not now upon; these prevailed only in the Latin church, nor in all that neither; nor for so long a time as he imagines. The greatest part of the Christian church in the East, in Africa, &c. never heard of most of them, nor have to this day: and those of the church of Rome, who, though men of sense, pretended to believe them, yet durst not put them upon the same foot with the holy gospel: the learned and more knowing among them called them *piæ fraudes*, and pleaded for them only as such, as pious cheats to raise the devotion of the simple and more ignorant amongst the people. But (as said before, p. 43.) none of them can pretend to those four marks set down, p. 12. n. 2. whereby the truth of the miracles of Moses and of Christ are infallibly demonstrated. And therefore if any of these legends were true, in whole or in part, yet we cannot have the same grounds for believing of them, as we have for the law and the gospel.

IV. Both of which you seem willing to mistake, in your deep prejudice to the gospel: for the chief end of the coming of the Messiah being to *bruise* Gen. iii. 15. *the serpent's head*, who had seduced man to sin; to *finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin*, Dan. ix. *and to make reconciliation for iniquity*; you now²⁴ contend, that men were never under the curse of God: *Quod neque aliquando fuerunt homines sub*

^m Limbor. Collat. p. 133.

Dei maledictione—*Quod non constat ex toto sacro textu illa ira Dei contra genus humanum, neque illa æterna maledictio: neque memini in quatuor Evangeliiis me legisse hoc secretum a Christo fuisse detectum: quare putamus id postea inventum, ut aliis dogmatibus fundamentum substernere-tur*ⁿ: i. e. “That neither this wrath of God against
 “mankind, nor that eternal curse does appear in the
 “whole sacred text: neither do I remember to have
 “read in the four Gospels that this secret was dis-
 “covered by Christ: therefore we think that it was
 “invented afterwards, to lay a foundation for other
 “opinions.” This is a bold and desperate assertion: let any man read Matt. xxv. 46. and John v. 29. and see whether eternal judgment be not there threatened; and whether these be not as it were repeating the very words of Daniel, chap. xii. 2. that *many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*. Compare likewise Mark ix. 44. with Isa. lxvi. 24. and then tell whether there is not a punishment after death for the wicked, and whether this be not revealed as well in the Old Testament as in the New.

If the Jew will criticise (as some Christians have done) upon the words *eternal* and *everlasting*, and say that they mean not a duration without end, I will give two answers.

1. That my business with the Jew is not now about the eternity of hell; but whether there be any punishment at all after death: because all the ends which the Jew proposes of the Messiah’s coming

ⁿ Limbor. Collat. p. 54, 55.

respect only this life ; and they deny any that are dead to have any benefit by the Messiah^o : and if so, then his making reconciliation for iniquity cannot deliver any mortal from the punishment after death.

And this punishment being described in the texts before quoted, and several others of the Old Testament, to be exceedingly greater than any we can endure in this life ; consequently the greatest benefit that we can receive by the Messiah is totally frustrated by the Jews : and they cannot deny but that the ends which the Christians propose for the coming of the Messiah are exceedingly more noble and more beneficial than those which they propose ; and fully as agreeable to the letter of the text, of bruising the head of the serpent, and making reconciliation for iniquity, and something more so than our deliverance from worldly enemies, who are not so properly called the serpent as the Devil is : and our deliverance from his power is more strictly called a *making an end of sin*, and *finishing of transgression* ; and more truly an everlasting deliverance (in whatever sense you will take that word) than any temporal deliverance : for if by everlasting you mean only temporal, yet it is the highest expression of temporal, and the greatest of temporal deliverances.

Let me not be mistaken, as if by *eternal* and *everlasting*, *the worm not dying*, and *the fire that never will be quenched*, &c. I favoured at all their constructions which would make all these to mean nothing but temporary, though a very long dura-

^o Limbor. Collat. num. 17. p. 70.

tion; but I would not intermix new subjects in this Discourse, and expatiate into long digressions; especially where the present controversy does not require it: therefore I go to my second answer.

2. If these words *eternal*, &c. can be thus turned, or if they cannot, I desire to know from the Jews, what plain text they have in all the law of Moses for everlasting life in heaven; and, in order thereunto, for the resurrection of the dead, which they profess firmly to believe? They gather these from texts which, as themselves confess, do bear another and a temporal meaning, respecting their outward state in this world; but which withal do (they say) typically represent their future glorious state in heaven, their true and everlasting Canaan. Yet they will not allow any thing in their law to be a type of the Messiah. Why? because the law does not expressly say that such a thing is a type of the Messiah; which yet it says as much as that Canaan was a type of heaven; that there will be any resurrection of the dead, or eternal life after that. What express scripture have they for what Rabbi Manasseh Ben Israel, in his treatise of the Resurrection of the Dead, does affirm to be the common opinion of the rabbins? viz. “That all the Israelites, “ even those that are dead, shall be partakers of the “ kingdom of the Messiah: and that to this end all “ those that are dead shall be raised again; by which “ miracle the wicked being converted shall acknowledge the true God, and forsake their errors: that “ then there shall be an end of this world, and a “ new one arise, or a change of this into a much “ better condition, wherein the moon shall be as “ bright as the sun, and the light of the sun seven-

“ fold more that it is now : at which time the de-
 “ mons and evil spirits shall be destroyed, and the
 “ trees bear fruit every month : and then, that God
 “ shall make a noble feast to the righteous out of
 “ the fish the leviathan : and that there shall be
 “ peace among the wild beasts ; neither shall they
 “ hurt men in that holy land : that then the temple
 “ of God shall be built again ; and the holy land
 “ be again divided amongst the tribes : where they
 “ shall eat and drink, beget children, and each be
 “ married to his own proper wife, &c.”^p This
 Turk’s paradise after death they can gather out of
 the words of the law ! They can find there their
 sumptuous fish-dinner upon the great whale levia-
 than ! But nothing of the heavenly kingdom of the
 Messiah : nothing of their deliverance from sin and
 hell ; but eating and drinking, and lying with wo-
 men. They should, upon this their scheme of their
 state after death, answer the question which one of
 the Sadducees asked of our Saviour concerning the
 seven brethren who had one wife, *whose wife she*
should be at the resurrection ?

And now I beseech you to consider, is not this a
 fatal delusion, that you should reject all the plain
 prophecies of the Messiah, because they do not, in
 such express words as you would dictate, lay open
 every particular of his spiritual state and govern-
 ment : and (at the same time) turn these prophecies
 to such wild and groundless fancies as are noways
 typified by your sacrifices, or any institution in your
 law ; nor can fill up, in any tolerable measure, the
 glories and extent of all those magnificent prophe-

^p Limbor. Collat. p. 221, 222.

cies concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, wherein God hath prepared for those who shall be thought worthy of it, not wine and women, and eating, such gross carnal pleasures as we are made capable of in
 Isa. lxiv. 4. this frail life; but such things as *since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen?* Yet because they are not particularly described (which cannot be so as we could understand them) you will not believe them, or that they reach beyond enjoyments of sense. And for this sole reason you reject your Messiah, because he brings you glories so far beyond all that you looked for: though that likewise, in the above quoted text, and many others of your scriptures, has been foretold to you.

And it is likewise shadowed out to you in this, that there was no sacrifice or expiation in your law for the most heinous crimes, such as blasphemy, idolatry, murder, adultery, incest, &c. as your learned Jew confesses ^q.

Nay lesser sins than these, as that of Eli's not effectually restraining, though he reprov'd his sons,
 1 Sam. iii. 14. *were not to be purged with sacrifice, nor offering for ever.*

Some Jews fancy that the yearly sacrifice of expiation made an atonement for all their sins.

We see, not for this of Eli's; and consequently not for greater sins.

The yearly sacrifice was but a sacrifice, though more solemn than the daily sacrifices: and therefore it purged all those sins only which could be purged by sacrifice.

If all the sins of the Jews had been purged every

^q Limbor. Collat. p. 209.

year, then had they not been remembered, brought to account, and so grievously punished as we have seen, and was oft threatened in the law, in after-ages, more than to the third and fourth generation: and it was a noted observation of your fathers, that there was a grain of the golden calf in all your after-judgments; i. e. that that sin was never totally forgiven, but still called to remembrance upon every fresh provocation: it is said, *I will visit upon her* Hos. ii. 13. *the days of Baalim, wherein she burnt incense to them:* and all the goodness and godly reformation of Josiah could not pacify God for the sins of Manasseh; which he would not pardon, but for them removed *Judah out of his sight.* *And surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord God of hosts.* 2 Kings xxiii. 26. xxiv. 3, 4. Isa. xxii. 14.

Therefore there were some sins which were not purged by the legal sacrifices; and these were the greatest of their sins: they were but the lesser sort of sins that were purged by them. How then were the greatest purged? If you will say, by repentance only, without any sacrifice;

Answ. The lesser sins require repentance: and do they need sacrifice too, when the greater sins are purged without it? or are greater sins more easily purged than the lesser?

Here then behold your law declaring of itself that it is not perfect: that there was a further and more efficacious sacrifice and atonement for sin than what was under the law; and this for the greatest of your sins. Then cast your eye upon that text in your law, *Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them:* and consider, that Deut. xxvii. 26. there was no atonement or sacrifice in your law for

the greatest and most heinous breaches of the law. How then shall you be delivered from this curse? or can you enter into eternal life without your being purged from this curse? Do you expect to be admitted into heaven while cursed and in your pollutions? can any cursed thing enter there? Then reflect upon the desperateness of that position of yours: *Nos vero nec redemptionem quam expectamus, nec Messiam ipsum pro animarum salute, nec pro gloria æterna consequenda, necessaria esse credimus*^r: i. e. “We do believe, that neither the deliverance which we expect, (by our Messiah,) nor “our Messiah himself, are necessary towards the “salvation of our souls, or for the obtaining of eternal glory.” Now then, if neither in the law nor in the future reign which you expect of your Messiah, there will be any propitiation or sacrifice for the greatest of your sins, how do you expect to be purged from them? Or must you enter into heaven before you are purged from them? Or were sacrifices only needless ceremonies, and not effectual for the purging of those sins which were purgeable by them? Or were greater sins easier purged, that is, by repentance only, than lesser sins; which, besides repentance, were not to be purged without sacrifice also?

I confess all this is out of doors, and urged to no purpose, if it be true which you have advanced, (as before quoted,) that men, by the fall, were never under the curse of God; and therefore needed no deliverance from it. That Israel was an holy nation, because they are so called in scripture, and that

^r Limbor. Collat. p. 98. ad finem.

Aaron was commanded to bless them: and God said to Balaam that they were blessed. All which, says your learned Jew^s, is so contrary to their being eternally cursed, *ut neque Deus ipse posset ea componere*, “that God himself cannot reconcile it.

I suppose he intends to come off by the word *eternal*, that it is not reconcilable with their being eternally under the curse of God: because there are so many places in the law and the prophets which speak of their great wickedness, and being under the temporal curse of God.

But blessing is as contrary to cursing in this world as in the next; for they are opposites in the nature of the thing: and therefore if the authority of such texts, as those before quoted, will free them from the eternal, it must also from the temporal curse, or from any curse at all.

But why then are they called *holy* and *blessed*, if they be under the curse? I suppose neither Jew nor Christian need be instructed in this, it is so known and common a distinction; men are called holy or blessed upon a personal or a relative account, as they are holy in themselves, or as related to holy things. Thus a nation or people taken into federal covenant with God, more peculiarly than any other nation upon the earth, may be called *blessed above all the nations of the earth*; and *an holy people*, in respect of the holiness of their laws, covenant, promises, &c. given to them by God.

Yet these may be a wicked and a cursed people in respect to their practice, if they live not pursuant to their holy law. Thus said Moses to your nation,

^s Limbor. Collat. p. 55.

- Deut. ix. 6. *Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.*
- Ezek. xvi. 48. *And says God himself, As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters*
- ver. 51. *—Neither hath Samaria committed half of thy*
- Mal. iii. 9. *sins. And again, Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Yet all this while that nation was called the holy nation, and Jerusalem the holy city, when it was full of murderers, because there was the temple and stated worship of God. Are these now such contradictions that God himself cannot reconcile? behold the same people blessed and cursed at the same time, but not in the same respect. Therefore trust not in your*
- Jer. vii. 4. *being called the holy people, notwithstanding of which you see you may be cursed, not only here but hereafter; for, as said before, to be blessed and cursed is as great a contradiction in this life as the next; and for a moment, as for eternity. And you find and complain, that you are cursed here upon many temporal accounts: and urge your great sins as the cause of your Messiah delaying his coming. Now sin is as much a contradiction to holiness, and more, than the curse of afflictions and punishment. Therefore if you can reconcile your being the holy people with your being at the same time such great sinners, you have solved the contradiction yourselves, which you thought too hard (when it made against you) for God himself: and you must at last grant, after all your struggling, that, by the fall of Adam, men were put under the curse of God; from which there were no sacrifices*

in your law sufficient to purge our souls: that therefore another and more efficacious sacrifice than *the blood of bulls and of goats* was necessary for the purging of our sins. And you reject this sacrifice of our Messiah, upon pretence that it is not clearly and in express words revealed in the Old Testament, without any figurative and dubious phrases: while, at the same time, you build your hopes of heaven, and explain the resurrection of the dead, in such a manner, and upon such texts, as, by no force can be screwed to those wild meanings you put upon them.

And, on the other side, when the death and sacrifice of the Messiah, and the satisfaction thereby made to God for our sins are revealed in those plain and express words, that *he made his soul an offering for sin*: that *God saw the travel of his soul, and was satisfied*: that *he laid upon him the iniquity of us all*: that *he poured out his soul unto death*: and *was numbered with the transgressors*: and *he bare the sin of many*: and *made intercession for the transgressors*, &c. then (as before shewn) *death* must not mean *death*, nor must any of these words be taken literally; but you put such forced and figurative interpretations upon them, as can by no means bear, which is proved, p. 95, &c.

You except against figurative expressions; yet you use them: you turn the plainest words into figures; and then tell us we have no plain words: you deduce consequences (as your notion of the resurrection, &c.) from words which are noways plain, nor can mean what you infer from them: you raise doctrines (as of the leviathan, &c.) from no words at all in your scriptures; yet you require for our doctrines

positive words out of your scriptures; and when you have such, you will not accept of them.

What scripture can you produce for your monstrous story of Armillus; which Hornbeck (*cont. Jud.* p. 253.) relates out of your author Avkrt Rochel, *sub signo Messiae septimo apud Hulsium*, p. 51? You suppose that a company of most profligate fellows will invent a new sin; that they will take a beautiful stone statue of a woman that is in Rome, and, warming it, will lie with it; that from thence it will conceive, and at last bursting, there will come forth a child, whose name shall be called Armillus; that he shall be twelve cubits high, and betwixt his eyes the length of a span: that he will say to the wicked, I am your Messiah and your God; that they will believe in him, and make him their king; and that to him will be gathered all the posterity of Esau: that your first Messiah Ben Joseph of the tribe of Ephraim will fight against him with thirty thousand Israelites; and shall have success in the first battle; but in the second battle that your Messiah will be killed and his army routed. That the angels will take away the dead body of your Messiah, and keep it with those of the patriarchs. That after this shall arise your second Messiah, Ben David, of the tribe of Judah, and Elias with him; to whom the Jews that are left shall be gathered, and oppose Armillus. That God shall destroy Armillus and his whole army by fire and brimstone and great stones cast down upon them from heaven. Then that Michael shall sound a trumpet so loud, as to open the graves and raise the dead in Jerusalem; and that the first Messiah, Ben Joseph, shall then be raised, who was kept under the gates

of Jerusalem. That then the Messiah Ben David shall be sent to gather the dispersed of the Jews from amongst all nations: all of whose kings will bring them upon their shoulders, &c.

This is the manner by which you interpret the scriptures; several of which are quoted in this relation, (as Ps. cx. 1. Zech. xiv. 3. Ezek. xxxviii. 22. Obad. i. 18.) as being to be fulfilled in the above-mentioned story of Armillus.

Which as it is wholly destitute of truth, or even probability, the mad excursion of groundless imagination; so does it in no sort come up to the prophecies in the holy scriptures concerning the Messiah, or the types of him therein exhibited; which are all fulfilled, even to an iota, in our blessed Lord and Saviour.

Yet you reject him, as not being sufficiently revealed in scripture; while you think you can deduce from thence this beastly and unworthy legend of Armillus.

You have been told before of the strange uncertainty you are at in the marks you have set up, whereby to know your Messiah when he comes. This you have reduced all to success, which cannot be known till the trial; and that has ended in your destruction, all the way hitherto, in the many experiments you have made under your several false Messiahs. And you can never be sure in any other who shall hereafter set up.

Nay further, you must be sure to be ruined by whomsoever shall first set up, by this scheme which you have laid down: for your Messiah Ben Joseph must first come, and be slain, and your armies routed by Armillus: so that it is not success, but ruin

that must be the mark of your first Messiah. This is great encouragement for any of you to follow whomsoever shall set up next for your Messiah !

You have had many such Messiahs already ; and whenever Ben Joseph shall come, he must be another unfortunate Messiah. You must, by your own reckoning, be once more undone, before your Messiah Ben David can come. And when your Messiah Ben Joseph shall come, and be defeated, how will you know by that mark that it is he ? That mark you have had in all the Messiahs you ever yet set up ; so that you will be still left to expect a further destruction : thus deplorable is your state !

Besides, which of these Messiahs is it, Ben Joseph or Ben David, to whom all those marks given of the Messiah in the scriptures do belong, as to the time, place, and other circumstances of his coming ? Or do some belong to one and some to the other ? Then you must tell which belong to which, or else you may be deceived in both ; at least you can be sure of neither.

XV. Neither of them can possibly now have that mark insisted upon before, sect. v. p. 104, &c. of the general expectation of the whole earth, not only of the Roman empire, but of all the east, that a wonderful and extraordinary person should be sent into the world about that time, who should be universal monarch of all the kings of the earth. And accordingly three kings came out of the east to worship our Jesus, guided by the miraculous leading of a new star raised in heaven to point him out.

But there is no such expectation now in the world, but only amongst you. Therefore none of your Messiahs can come with that mark, which

seems even necessary to introduce such a Saviour into the world.

For to suppose such a person designed by God, from all eternity, to be universal Lord and Saviour of the whole earth; and that all the dispensations which God ever gave to man were directed to him as the centre and completion of all; it would seem necessary and proportionable to such an economy, that so glorious a person should be not only foretold, but prefigured in types and observances: nay it could not be otherwise, if all the institutions of religion were to be completed in him; for that would naturally infer that they were, that they could be no more than types and forerunners of him to whom they pointed.

Thus Christ is said to have been promised $\pi\rho\delta$ Tit. i. 2. $\chi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omega\nu$ αἰωνίων, which words if they should not reach the length of our English translation, viz. *before the world began*; (by which the revelation of the great Messiah must have been made to the angels in heaven before the creation of man, or of this lower world;) yet this we are sure of, that Moses has told us he was promised to Adam and Eve immediately upon their fall. Then were sacrifices instituted, as types of the great and only sacrifice which could bruise the serpent's head and make atonement for sin: which, by that promise, was reserved for the seed of the woman; and therefore could not be fulfilled in the blood of beasts. Gen. iii. 15.

This institution of sacrifices descended from that time through all the posterities of Adam, as a necessary part of religion, and the worship of God: and even the heathen retained so much of their original institution, that they looked upon them in the

nature of a vicarious suffering of others for our sins: and the wisest of them did thence conclude, that there must be some more noble sacrifice than that of beasts whereby our sin should be purged. This led some of them to human sacrifices; but still that was not blood more noble than our own: and they could go no further.

Yet they were in expectation of the coming of a glorious person from heaven, who should purge their sins, and introduce a new and golden age of justice and all goodness, to extend through the whole earth: and they generally all over the world did expect him then to come at that time when our blessed Jesus was born, as before has been shewn.

But that expectation is now over. There never was such at any time, either before or after that very time: the expectation was always long before that time; but no time, except that time, was the time expected for his coming: therefore none of your Messiahs, whom you still expect, can possibly enter the world with this necessary and glorious mark of the Messiah. For that time being over, to which the general expectation was determined, it ceased there, and cannot now be taken up again; because, as it could not be begun by concert through so many distant nations, who held no correspondence, and its beginning was never known; so for the same reasons it cannot now be begun again, for then the beginning would be known; and it could not, without a miracle, gain such acceptance as to become universal through the whole world, as it was before.

IIag. ii. 7.

And without this it could not be said, *The desire of all nations shall come*: for how was he

their desire, if they expected no such person to come?

But as neither of the Messiahs whom you pretend to look for are expected by any body but yourselves, and that not by all, if any of you, (as we have reason to believe,) in good earnest; so, if they were expected according to the scheme which you have drawn, the first would be the contempt, and the second the terror, but neither of them *the desire of all nations*.

And neither of these motives, either of terror or contempt, could persuade the Gentiles towards the fulfilling of what is written concerning the Messiah; *The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to* Isa. lx. 3. *the brightness of thy rising.*

This began remarkably to be fulfilled in the coming of the three kings from the east to the light, whether literal, of the miraculous star, or, what that signified, the light of the gospel: and these came to the Messiah, not as you expect, after being reduced by force of arms, and converted by his success in war, but they came *to the brightness of his rising*, to his birth; and adored him in his swaddling-clothes: *They rejoiced with exceeding great joy*, when they Matth. ii. saw his signal hung out in the heavens. This joy ^{10.} could not come from contempt or fear: but he was truly *the desire of all nations*; which neither of your Messiahs can be, by your own account of them.

He was not to come as a terror, but a light to the Gentiles; as he has proved, not by conquering, but converting of them.

And towards this it was necessary that he should come under all those circumstances which were pro-

per for the obtaining of such an end ; to persuade the Gentiles to receive him as a legislator sent from heaven for spiritual and eternal purposes, and not with any design upon their temporal government, or for any secular by-ends of his own.

Therefore he ought not to have come in the outward pomp and grandeur of the world ; but the furthest removed from it that was possible : of mean but virtuous parentage, his life to be led in poverty and afflictions, and his death ignominious. He must have come in a corrupt and wicked age, to oppose iniquity in its torrent : and hence it naturally follows, that he must be persecuted even to the death. And that his death could not be deferred long, after his beginning to preach publicly ; for that a wicked world could not long bear it. ^t Which was the reason Socrates gave at his trial, why he taught privately so long ; for that otherwise he must have perished sooner ; and so have been able to do less good.

And we may reasonably suppose that this was one cause why our blessed Saviour did not begin to preach till he was thirty years of age : and about
 Matth. iv. 17.
 Luke iii. 23. three years after was crucified.

Plato describing the character of a perfect just man, says^u, “ that he shall be scourged, tormented, “ fettered, and at last, having suffered all manner of “ evils, that he shall be crucified, or cut in pieces,” as the sacrifices were.

And says^x, “ That it is necessary they should

^t Plato Apol. Socr.

^u “Ο δίκαιος μαστιγώσεται, στρεβλώσεται, δεδήσεται—Τελευτῶν, πάντα κακὰ παθὼν ἀνασχινδυνευθήσεται. De Repub. l. ii.

^x Ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἔστι περιμένειν ἕως ἄν τις μάθῃ ὡς δεῖ πρὸς Θεοῦς καὶ

“ wait till such a one should come, to teach them
 “ how they ought to behave themselves towards
 “ God and towards man. O, when shall that time
 “ come !” says he, “ and who shall be that teacher !
 “ how greatly do I desire to see that man, who
 “ he is !”

And he says^y, that this lawgiver must be somewhat more than of human race ; for that as beasts are governed by men, so must men by a nature which is superior to their own ; and therefore, that this man who was to be the universal lawgiver to mankind, must likewise partake of the nature of God. This was the ground of the heathen notion, in feigning their heroes and demons to be begotten by the gods. So agreeable (but far exceeding) was our Jesus in his nature and all his qualifications to the notion and expectation of the Gentiles ! and therefore have so many of them gladly submitted unto him.

But such a Messiah as you Jews do now describe yours to be, as it was far from what the Gentiles expected, and therefore he could never convert, though he should conquer them ; so it seems indeed that yourselves do not expect any such an one as you pretend, only for an excuse.

Some of your rabbies saying that he is come ; some, that he will never come ; some, that he will not come in this world till the resurrection of the dead ; others, that his coming is not material, nor to be placed amongst the fundamentals of your faith ;

πρὸς ἀνθρώπους διακεῖσθαι. Πότε οὖν παρέσται ὁ χρόνος οὗτος ; καὶ τίς ὁ παιδεύων ; ἥδιστα γὰρ ἂν μοι δοκῶ ἰδεῖν τοῦτον τὸν ἄνθρωπον τίς ἐστίν. Al-
 cibiad. de Precat.

^y De Leg. l. iv.

others, that his coming is no way desirable, as bringing greater mischief with it than advantage to the Jews; others, forbidding all inquiry into the time of his coming, as indeed despairing of it.

Of all these particulars see the authority of your own rabbies, in Hornbeck *contr. Jud.* l. II. p. 114, 115, and 123. There you will find in *Codice Sanhedrin*, R. Hillel saying, "That no Messiah shall be given to Israel; for that they have had him already, in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah." And in your Talmud, R. Ula says of the Messiah, "Let him come, but let me not see it:" that is, for the miseries it will bring to the Jews, in gathering them out of all countries where they are peaceably settled, to forsake their houses and possessions, and follow their Messiah to wars, and the calamities that attend them: especially considering what has been before said, that they must certainly expect destruction and ruin under their first Messiah Ben Joseph: for all which, their possessing at last the land of Canaan will be no sufficient reparation; they living now in countries as good as that, and enjoying both ease and plenty. So that the conquests of their Messiah may bring greater glory to him, but no good to the Jews proportionable to the miseries they must endure in fighting for him. Upon all which considerations R. Ula had reason to say, "Let him come, but let me not see him." The same said Rabbi John, in *Codice Sanhedrin*.

And the many disappointments you have met with in your Messiahs hitherto, has made you forbid any to inquire into the time of the Messiah's coming; your *Schebet Jehuda*, p. 245. (as quoted by Hornbeck, p. 123.) curses those "who set any

“time for the coming of the Messiah;” and gives this reason, “That if the Messiah does not come at that time, the people’s hearts do fail, and they think that they are put off with perpetual fruitless hope.” Therefore in the Talmud, *Cod. Sanhedrin*, cap. 11. Rabbi Samuel says, in the words of R. Jonathan, “Let their bones be broken who compute the periods of the times.” And this may the better be forbid, because R. Josephus Albo has struck this article concerning the coming of the Messiah out of the number of your fundamental doctrines: so that now you may believe it or not, as you please.

And how then will the Gentiles be converted by you? you have confessed (as before shewn, p. 203, &c.) that you have no arguments against them; and now you seem to despair even of conquering them: though, if that were done, it would rather obstruct their conversion, as has been argued before.

And plain reason does evince, that the qualifications of a Messiah for the conversion of the Gentiles could be no other than what were found in our Jesus; and such a one they did expect, and therefore so readily did give up their names to him.

As his miracles were so flagrant and undoubted as to vouch him sent of God; so could not malice itself find out the least possibility of any sinister or self-end in him: therefore he lived poor and persecuted, and poured out his soul unto death as a demonstration that *his kingdom was not of this world*.

He chose followers that were poor and unlearned; and this was necessary to obviate the objection, that either interest or craft had any part in the framing

of his doctrine. He enjoined to all his disciples the doctrine of self-denial, and the cross; and bade them look for nothing but afflictions in this world: and this was necessary to obviate the objection, as if either lust, pleasure, or ambition had any part in the framing of his doctrine.

He was rejected by you of his own nation; and this was necessary to obviate the objection, as if he sought to gain you to his side upon the account of obtaining the dominion over you, and then to turn your arms against the Gentiles.

His conquest of the Gentiles, by their conversion, did not begin till after his ascension; and this was necessary to obviate the objection, as if he had sought the temporal rule over them; as Mahomet did over his converts, and as you propose of your Messiah.

And not in the first conversion of the Gentiles, nor for three hundred years after, were any of their kings or states brought into Christianity; and this was necessary to obviate the objection, as if the forgery of the gospel had been supported by human authority; which rendered it hazardous for any to have detected the deceit: this was so necessary, as that we see the Deists, for want of this, have yet the impudence to suppose it, contrary to all truth, viz. ²that authority and laws being on the Christian side was the cause that its deceit was not detected at the beginning; which is now too late to be done, for the distance of the ages.

Therefore we may now see the wonderful providence of God in this conduct: for if the Deists had the

² Toland's *Life of Milton*, p. 91, 92. printed an. 1699.

argument (as they foolishly pretend it) of the gospel being abetted by kings or states in its infancy, or before it was fully settled and spread over the earth; we should never get their mouths stopped, and it would bear a great face of suspicion that some cheat might have been put upon us, when none who knew it durst discover it without apparent hazard to themselves.

And again, kings and states might have come, by this time of day, to think that their authority had something to do in settling of the church; and that the gospel was beholden to them; at least sycophants and flatterers would so have complimented them: and Erastianism would have had a plausible plea: it is a branch of Deism; it stands and falls with that: and if it had such an umbrage as this, it would overrun us; for it keeps its ground without it.

But Christ would not permit kings to become his servants till he had first endured three hundred years of their persecution; to teach them that his church was not built upon their shoulders, nor depended upon their authority; and to stop the mouths of these several sorts of Deists.

In all things, in every step of his conduct, there does appear such divine wisdom and foresight, as that if any part had been otherwise than it is, the whole would have been visibly defective, and consequently not from God; not but that many things defective may not be from God. He makes every thing perfect in its kind, to the end for which he has ordained it; but he makes some things for higher ends than others; and in comparison one thing is more perfect than another.

Deut. xviii.
18, 19.

Thus the law of Moses was perfect in its kind, for those ends and purposes to which it was designed; but Moses was not designed for the ultimate and universal lawgiver; he never pretended to it, but on the contrary he pointed out to one who was to come after him, and denounces God's judgments against those who should *not hearken unto him*.

Moses was not designed, nor his law calculated, for the conversion of the Gentiles.

Deut.
xxxiii. 5.

And he had few of those qualifications which the Gentiles required in the supreme and universal Lawgiver. He was bred up at Pharaoh's court; the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, and learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, who were then the most learned nation upon the face of the earth; he was mighty in words and in deeds; he marched out of Egypt at the head of six hundred thousand men; and having rescued his own nation, he became their king: therefore he was not free from the suspicion of design in the case; and was a man every way qualified both for wisdom, courage, and education, to have contrived and effected it.

And after him his disciples went on, according to his example, conquering with the sword. And you now tell us, that they had no other design but to gain that pleasant country to themselves; that the law which Moses gave them proposed nothing to them beyond this; and that you hope for no more from the Messiah whom you expect, but temporal conquests, to restore you to that land again, and to subdue the whole world under you by force of arms; that there is nothing at all spiritual or heavenly in his kingdom, but only a temporal, earthly grandeur;

^athat it was not meant to carry you to heaven, but to make you great upon earth; that the offices of the Messiah respect only temporal things, and are noways necessary towards the salvation of our souls or eternal life, as your learned Jew before quoted has asserted. See before, p. 214.

Now what would Socrates, or Plato, or any of the wise men among the Gentiles say to this notion of a Messiah? Would they not have detested it as vicious, as recommending of pride, ambition, covetousness, and the vanity of this world, against which they fought, and thought them unworthy of a philosopher, or a truly virtuous person? Therefore such a Messiah could never have converted them.

But, on the other hand, there is not any one circumstance or qualification which they could desire in a Messiah which is not filled up, nay, far exceeded in their own way, beyond what they could have contrived as to the strictest rules of virtue, in the person, life, and death of our Messiah, and in all his conduct; shewing beyond the possibility of a deceit, or a face of suspicion, that he was a Legislator sent from heaven without any temporal designs: first, to give the sanction of God to morality; which, though these philosophers taught truly, yet could they not stamp upon it such a seal of divine authority: and, secondly, to carry them further, and teach them the true worship of God, and expiation of their sins; with the assurance of everlasting life, and the means of obtaining it: all which they confessed they wanted, and that they did expect such a Messiah, or a person anointed, a

^a Limbor. Collat. n. iv. p. 53. and n. xiv. p. 66.

Christ, that is, delegated and authorized by God, to be born into the world, who should teach this gospel or glad tidings unto them : and he came with such demonstration of his commission, and divinely-wise conduct in all his administration, that a Socrates, a Pythagoras, or a Plato, could not only have found no objection, but must have admired and adored, as so far exceeding whatever they imperfectly had conjectured, though they were assisted with the greatest wisdom and virtue that was in all the Gentile world.

Thus you see that the objections which you Jews and some of the lewd and foolish Deists have made against the poverty, sufferings, and death of our Messiah, turn all into demonstrations of his truth : and were so necessary, that as he could not have fulfilled the law without them, so could he never any otherwise have been received of the Gentiles.

For God forces not, though he governs the wills of men : that would be to destroy the creature he had made ; for without the freedom of will man would not be a reasonable animal : and the wisdom of God is chiefly known in so disposing of things as to bring his own purposes to pass, and yet leaving men to the full freedom of their own wills.

This was one reason why our Jesus would not suffer the devils to confess to him : and charged several whom he cured not to make it known till the time should come that he was to suffer : for that would have hastened his sufferings before the time, for the reason before given out of Socrates' defence.

It was in his power to have forced the Jews to a confession of him ; but then they had not acted

freely. Therefore having given them all reasonable conviction of his mission, he left them to their freedom, whether they would acknowledge him or not. And their obstinacy did harden them still more, and depraved their judgment; which was a just punishment of their obstinacy, as well as a natural effect of it: for sin does always punish itself; it is its own accuser, judge, and executioner. This blinded the obstinate among the Jews, that they knew not their Messiah: for *had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*. And thus that wonderful economy for the salvation of man was brought about by the greatest conduct of wisdom and goodness that was possible.

And by the same means the conversion of the Gentiles was contrived: for had the Jews all generally followed Christ, the Gentiles, being left to their own freedom, would never have received him; because they would have looked upon him as a Legislator sent only to the Jews, whose law kept them at the utmost distance and detestation of the Gentiles: whom therefore the Gentiles hated and despised, and thought it abomination so much as to eat with them; and therefore would have disdained to have received a lawgiver from them, who pretended to a right and a promise to conquer and overcome all the whole Gentile world, and subdue them under their Messiah; which they understood was to be by force of arms. And though such a Messiah had set up, with never so much guise of humility and meekness, and put out the most specious declarations (as other conquerors have at first done) if he had led the whole body of the Jews after him, the Gentiles would have looked upon all this

Gen. xliii.
32.

as a trick to disarm them, by rendering them secure; and would not have so been caught.

On the other hand, the Jews could never have received a Messiah from the Gentiles: that was contrary to all the promises made to them in their law.

Therefore as it was necessary, with respect to the *segullah*, that the Messiah should be of the Jews; so was it necessary, in respect of the Gentiles, that he should be rejected by the chief of the Jews; that he should be persecuted and destroyed by them: he could not otherwise have become an universal law-giver both to the Jews and the Gentiles.

And let me say, in respect of the Deists, it was necessary that there should be a *segullah*, or peculiar church of God set up somewhere, in some one nation of the world; else the whole earth would have been irrecoverably sunk in idolatry: and there could never, in such a frame of things, be any expiation for the sins of mankind; who, therefore, were all represented in the nation of the *segullah*; and to be, by degrees, incorporated into them, and converted by them. As is shewn before, p. 184, &c.

And it was likewise necessary that this nation of the *segullah* should be the fewest and most neglected people of the earth, as shewn p. 160.

And it was necessary that the Messiah should have been rejected by the chief and governing part of the Jews, the chief priests, and sanhedrin: so was it as necessary that he should have been received and followed by others of the meanest and less noticed of the Jews; because the Gentiles were to be converted by the Jews, and brought into their *segullah*, as shewn before, p. 185.

And these Jews, who at first followed Christ,

were to be but few and inconsiderable during his life; to take away all umbrage from the Gentiles, as well as the governing part of the Jews, that he designed any infraction upon their civil rights and liberties.

Therefore the great flowing in of the Jews first, Acts vi. 7. particularly of their priests, and afterwards of the Gentiles, was not till after the ascension of our blessed Lord: to put them out of all fear of his going about to set up a temporal kingdom, after his resurrection, (as his disciples expected, Acts i. 6.) For that had made a great noise, and given the alarm both to the high priest and governors of the Jews, as well as to the Gentiles: therefore, though Acts x. 40, he shewed himself openly, after his resurrection, ^{41.} and to so many, and at sundry times, and by such infallible proofs as to confirm the truth of it past all possibility of a deceit, or ground of scruple to after-ages, yet he shewed not himself openly to *all the people*. That would have set the whole world in a flame all on the sudden; who were not prepared, for they knew not as yet the design of his kingdom, that it was to be spiritual and heavenly; till he should in a long tract of time, and by degrees, bring over the whole kingdom of the earth to his subjection, in the belief of his gospel; not by force of arms, (for that could not have done it,) but according to the full freedom of their own wills, by a rational conviction.

And it is observable, that though one great arti- Acts i. 22. cle of the apostolical office at first was particularly to be witnesses of the resurrection of Christ; that this, at first, was necessary to the constitution of an apostle; and therefore Christ did shew himself in

a miraculous manner to St. Paul, to qualify him for that office : yet, as himself says, it was *last of all, as one born out of due time*. For he was constituted to be the apostle of the Gentiles, who came in to the gospel *last of all, as born out of due time*.

And he was the only man among the apostles who had acquired learning by study and education : therefore he was not admitted till the gospel had been first preached by the others, and fully established : and he was, at first, a persecutor of it ; to take away the least suspicion that his parts or learning had any share in the contrivance of the gospel. And then his coming in at last did remove the prejudice, that no men of learning and sagacity had embraced it. He broke the ice for the Gentiles, who were admirers of learning ; and for this they valued him the more, and hearkened to him.

I could enlarge in many other particulars ; indeed in every particular through the whole economy of the gospel, to shew the wonderful conduct and most minute proportion that there is in every part : which, of itself, were sufficient to convince any considering person that the whole contrivance was divine, and that no lesser wisdom could have so disposed of it.

But that would require a treatise by itself. And thus much I thought necessary for my present subject : to shew how we Gentiles were drawn into the belief of the gospel by the cords of a man ; by such methods as overcame our reason, without destroying the freedom of our will ; such as give us the utmost demonstration of the wisdom and goodness of God, without the interposition of his almighty power, by which he governs the unthinking part of his creation.

And as the Jews first brought us into the gospel, so would we now provoke them to emulation by the same methods in which God has dealt with us; by shewing them the beauty, the harmony, and irrefragable demonstration of fact, that has convinced us of the truth of the gospel.

The infidelity of so many of you Jews was necessary (as shewed before) towards our receiving of the gospel, till *the fulness of the Gentiles should come in*.

And if *the casting away of you be the recon-* Rom. xi. 15.
ciling of the world, what shall the receiving of you be, but life from the dead? Amen.

XVI. Let me now conclude, and apply all that has been said, by a short recapitulation and enforcement of the principal parts of it.

You have given up all the credibility that there is for the truth of Moses and your law, rather than admit of the same credibility (and stronger) that there is for Christ and the gospel. So that, as said before, and as has been proved, you have involved yourselves under the necessity, either of rejecting Moses, or embracing of Christianity.

Your objections have been answered, *ex abundanti*; for after the full proof of the miracles of Christ and his apostles, there needed no more to have been said as to receiving the doctrine which they taught, and those expositions they gave of the law; which stand upon as sure a foundation, and carry the same infallible credentials of divine authority as the law itself.

And these cannot be overthrown by never so great a cloud of difficulties or objections, though they could not be answered to satisfaction, without

disproving the motives of credibility upon which they are received.

For we may have sufficient reason to believe many things, and yet not be able to solve all the difficulties that may arise concerning them.

As in natural things, we cannot explain the manner and conveyance of sensible objects, through our outward organs to our soul; nor the thousandth part of those difficulties which are started concerning the soul itself: yet no man doubts but that he has a soul, that he sees, hears, thinks, reasons, &c.

So in supernatural things, who can solve all that may be asked concerning the being and operations of God? Yet all this is no argument against the belief of a first cause, and its essential perfections; because it is forced upon us by undeniable reason.

Therefore, unless you can shew the fallacy of those four marks, which in the first part are set down, to ascertain the truth of matters of fact; or, secondly, shew that the matters of fact of Christ want any of them; all your objections borrowed from other topics can signify nothing against the truth of Christianity.

And if you can shew the uncertainty of these marks; or that they are wanting to the evidence of Christianity: then down comes your law with it, and we must all together turn Deists.

You say, (as has been before quoted, p. 157.) that if Christ, after he rose from the dead, had appeared to the whole congregation of Israel, &c. that this would have removed all scruple from you; and that you would, without all doubt, have believed him.

And now, I beseech you, have you not had as

miraculous confirmation of him, as even this which you require? Was not the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon him at his baptism, and the audible voice from heaven before all the people, telling them from the mouth of God, *This is my beloved Son*, &c. was not this a much stronger indication from God, than if a man formerly dead had appeared? Might not one man be like another? Have not many been deceived upon that point? Were not the apostles hardly brought to believe it, even by many miracles? Would there not be more questions to be asked in that case, than in such a visible apparition from heaven before the eyes of so many people, and in words spoke from heaven in all their hearing?

Our blessed Saviour said to some of your fathers, Luke xvi. 31. *that if they heard not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* And the reason is plain, because the proofs for Moses, &c. are more indubitable than the apparition of the dead man.

But do you want even this proof? Did not Christ appear, after his resurrection, to above five hundred of your fathers at once? And has not this been attested by a multitude of miracles wrought by those of your fathers who saw him, who eat with him, and conversed forty days with him, after he rose from the dead? Did he not appear to Paul from heaven after his ascension? If not, would not some of those Jews who then journeyed with him, who saw that light above the brightness of the sun, and heard the voice, though not the distinct words of him that spoke to Paul; who were struck down to the earth, and greatly terrified; who saw Paul struck

blind upon the spot, and led him by the hand into Damascus : would none of these have discovered the cheat, if all this story had been a mere invention and forgery of St. Paul's ? Would none of these have done it, who were so far from being favourable to the Christian side, that they were then going along with Paul to persecute that way, even unto the death ? Would they not have done it, when Paul trumped it up, and the Christians laid such stress upon it, that it is told at large in three several places of the Acts, chap. ix. xxii. and xxvi. when Paul, within three days, began to preach Christ in Damascus, and confounded the Jews there, where those who journeyed with him were then present, and might have confounded him, if they had denied that matter of fact, when he adduced them as witnesses of it ? But above all, the miracles which Paul wrought, as great even as this, do vouch his truth in this matter, seeing they are deduced to us, with all the four marks before mentioned, which do infallibly demonstrate the certainty of any matter of fact.

Moreover, consider that all these witnesses to the resurrection of Christ were Jews, and none other. It has been before observed that Christ preached to none but the Jews before his death ; so after his resurrection he shewed himself to none other but to them : and from the Jews only have we Gentiles received the knowledge of his resurrection, and of all the gospel. This is a tradition of the Jews, and deduced through a greater number of them, and their posterities, (as before has been shewn,) than there are Jews who now stand out against it. These reject the tradition of their fathers, upon which they

now lay the whole stress of their religion; and are proof against those convictions which have converted the Gentiles. The Christian Jews did not Joh. xv. 16. set up Christ for their Messiah; they chose not him, but he chose them: they knew him not to be the Messiah till they were convinced by many miracles; they understood not the nature of his kingdom, but were brought by him from their notion of reigning to that of suffering with him upon the earth. Therefore these are to be less suspected than those others of your fathers, who set up Messiahs for themselves, in hopes to reign with them in the land of Canaan; and have been as often deceived, and suffered miserable destruction by it.

But, as before has been argued, there is no such visible means in the world to bring them to that temporal grandeur which they expect, and the nation of the Jews to that universal honour, supereminence, and dominion through the whole earth, as their conversion to Christianity: then will Christ be not only *a light to the Gentiles*, but *the glory of his people Israel*.

But chiefly and above all, I earnestly recommend to you Jews the consideration of your eternal state, towards which you expect no benefit from your Messiah; and yet without whom you can give no account how you shall be delivered and purged from those sins for which there were no sacrifices or expiation under the law, as has been discoursed before.

There was none for those who *fled to the cities* Num. xxxv. 25, 28. *of refuge*: nothing could deliver them from thence but *the death of the high priest*: which was a plain type that nothing but the death of our great High

Priest can deliver us from the guilt of sin. The like parallel might be carried on through every branch of your law pointing to the Messiah; but that would divert too much: you have only a few instances here; the whole would take up a discourse longer than all I have written to you.

I wish even the temporal glory of Israel: and should rejoice that, in the day of their conversion, I should be found among those who are sprung from their stock, and shall exult to reassume our ancient and most honourable name of Jews.

And let the chiefest glory, as in heaven so on earth, be to those of you who shall lead the way, and be instrumental in the restoration of the families of Jacob.

Towards which I will with these my small endeavours join my hearty prayers; made more effectual as offered up in the communion of the holy catholic church, that part of it especially in England which prays for you on this blessed day, to your God and our God, through the mediation and satisfaction made for us by your and our only Messiah; and after his holy example, who this day poured forth his blood with his prayers for you upon the cross. O Lord, that this were the time when they should be heard! Amen. Lord Jesu, come quickly!

Good Friday, 1689.

THE
TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY
DEMONSTRATED :
WITH
A DISSERTATION
CONCERNING
PRIVATE JUDGMENT AND AUTHORITY.
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
A VINDICATION
OF
THE SHORT METHOD WITH THE DEISTS,
IN ANSWER TO
A BOOK LATELY PUBLISHED WITH THIS TITLE :

“ A Detection of the true Meaning and wicked Design of a
“ Book, entitled, A Plain and Easy Method with the Deists ;
“ wherein it is proved, that the Author's (Leslie) Four Marks
“ are the Marks of the Beast, and are calculated only for the
“ Cause and Service of Popery. London : Printed and are
“ to be sold by B. Bragg, at the Raven in Paternoster Row,
“ 1710.”

P R E F A C E

TO THE

SHORT METHOD WITH THE DEISTS VINDICATED.

WHEN first I saw this Detection, I went to it with great expectation, to see what could be said against the four marks set down in the Short Method, &c. But the title-page calling them “the marks of the beast,” and charging the design to be popish and wicked, I concluded it to be Grub-street, wrote by some impotent whig or dissenter, in spite to the author, rather to give him ill names, than to answer his arguments.

But when I had read it over, I own it confounded me. I was filled with horror and amazement, to see Christ our Lord not only blasphemed but ridiculed, and the truth of his facts and of the gospel put into a lower class of probability than the most senseless legends either of the papists or the heathens. Here the cloven foot appeared notoriously, and shewed out of what quiver this envenomed arrow came, even of an inveterate and malicious Deist, filled with all the rage of hell against the glory of God manifested in that revelation he gave to the world for the salvation of mankind.

And it gave me a very melancholy reflection, to see the spirit of infidelity let loose amongst us, and of late years appear open and barefaced; and by this means to have made so many proselytes from Christianity among all orders and degrees of men; insomuch, that it is become a recommendation and mark of wit to be one of these freethinkers;

and all others are loaded with the contemptible name of prieststridden and slavish in their understandings.

For these ends this Detection was wrote : but (blessed be God) so poor and mean, as to the reasoning part, that it must confirm any man of sense much more in the truth and certainty of the Christian religion, to see how wretchedly silly all these efforts are which are made against it. For this reason I thought to neglect it, and let it sink under its own weight of nonsense and contradiction. But I was told that it had effect with many, not only of the unthinking and lowest size of understandings, but with others of more capacity, whose prejudice and inclinations made every thing of this sort most acceptable and valuable to them. And that some had boasted of it, not only as a very shrewd but an unanswerable piece, against priestcraft and all the *fourb* of revelation, to use their own expression as they have given it us in print.

This determined me to write an answer to the Detection. And in thinking this matter over again, I found there were other marks or evidences for Christianity very material, besides those four which I have set down in the Short Method with the Deists. Not that these four do not sufficiently evince the truth of Christianity, and distinguish it from any false facts which ever were in the world ; but there are other evidences of Christianity which no other fact how true soever either has had or can have. These add to the evidence, though not to the truth of Christianity. And it is glorious to see this fact of Christ stand single in the creation, with evidence peculiar to itself alone.

I have answered the Detection by the first four marks only, because these are what he undertook to disprove. And I have put that answer first by itself, because I would not intermix it with that demonstration of Christianity which follows, and would be much interrupted, if the discourse should break off, as frequently as the answering the Detection upon every particular would require. And though

the last four marks which I have now added to this demonstration would at first sight overthrow all the poor sophisms in the Detection, none of the facts he produces as a disproof of the first four marks having the least shadow or pretence of coming up to the evidence of any of the other marks; yet these not being in his view when he wrote the Detection, he might think he had gained his point against the first four marks, and so overthrown the Short Method, and put me to bring in fresh succours for the support of Christianity. But having demonstrated the truth of Christianity by the first four marks, I now by the others shew the glory of it; which, as the sun, not only dispels the darkness of error, but obscures all inferior truths, that, like the lesser lights of moon and stars, disappear at the approach of this superior light, and have no glory, *by reason of the glory that excelleth.*

And here I bring in the Jews, to let them see how far the evidence of the fact of Christ outshines that of their Moses, who has no share in the sixth, seventh, and eighth evidences here produced for Christianity; which has likewise all the other that are or can be produced for Moses or the law.

I have not made the Jew a party in this dispute, because indeed I could not find what to say for his cause, supposing myself a Jew; which is the method I take in representing and discussing the opinion of my adversary, to say all I can for it, as if it were really my own opinion. But in this case, it was not in my power to put any tolerable answer in the mouth of a Jew, unless I should make him totally give up his cause; which in an opponent would seem a betraying it. Therefore I have left it to themselves, to say more on their own behalf than did occur to me, if they can find it out; for I think their cause more naked than even that of the Deists, because they must run counter to their own principles, and overthrow all their foundations, in defending themselves against Christianity, which is built upon them.

But in the third part of this Discourse, concerning private judgment and authority, I have introduced the Jew as a speaker, because though he has so very little to say against the evidence of Christianity, upon the foot of reason, or of the prophecies concerning the Messiah in the Old Testament; yet if we put the proof of Christianity and the truth of the scriptures upon the authority of the church, as is done in the church of Rome, there the arguments of the Jew seem to me irrefragable against this foundation of Christianity. And this is the clearest manner wherein I can shew, to a sincere and honest Roman catholic, the prejudice which his church has done to Christianity, in this new topic she has taken up to defend herself against the reformation, of resolving our faith into the authority of the church, and denying us the use of our private judgment, or the most flagrant proofs in the world against such authority.

But as I said before to the Jew, so I do now to the Roman catholic, that I have made his cause my own, and argued for it all that is possibly in my power. But not to preclude him from offering whatever further may occur to him in defence of his own tenet; which I shall be most willing to hear, and promise to consider it as impartially as I can; because it is for my own sake, and I would not pawn my soul for my party.

Whoever is in earnest with religion would wish all the world of his mind: and therefore as he is zealous to persuade others, so he ought to be patient in bearing the contradiction of those who oppose themselves; instructing them in meekness, while they shew any docible temper. And when this meets on both sides, the Christian church may have hopes of peace.

All I have desired of the Roman catholic in this Dissertation is, to give us free liberty of reasoning together, and not to say, I have already determined myself upon the authority of the church, and will hear no more, nor admit any argument against it: I will not suffer any dispute con-

cerning whatever the church has proposed to me as of faith: it is in vain to offer to shew a man any thing, till first you have persuaded him to open his eyes. Yet I despair not, for Christ is the λόγος, the reason or wisdom of God, and that ray of it communicated to us makes us men and his image: it is part of our nature, and we cannot divest ourselves wholly of it; for we must make use of our reason in finding out arguments why we should not make use of it. And since reason must be our instructor, why should we deny it to be our guide? why should we exclude it in religion, where we have the greatest occasion for it, to see that we are not misled? Must we be sharp sighted in our temporal affairs, and carried blindfold as to our eternal? Must we not examine why we believe in Christ rather than in Mahomet? why we are not Jews this day, but Christians? Or do we take up our religion by chance, according to the place where we were born and bred? and does not this befall most men, by stopping their ears against reason? Does God admit us to reason with him? *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord:* does he appeal to our private judgment? he says, *Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard:* did he permit Abraham to argue with him? *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* and shall man say to us, You are not allowed to ask us any questions at all, but to believe implicitly whatever we declare unto you? ²⁵

This is the cause I have undertaken: and how shall I not hope that reason will prevail,

Christo duce, et auspice Christo?

From my Tusculum.

All Saints, 1710.

THE
SHORT AND EASY METHOD
WITH
THE DEISTS
VINDICATED.

*The Four Marks of the Truth of Facts, upon which the
Short Method proceeds.*

I. That the fact be such, as that men's outward senses, their eyes and ears may judge of it.

II. That it be done publicly in the face of the world.

III. That not only public monuments be kept up in memory of it, but some outward actions to be performed.

IV. That such monuments and such actions or observances be instituted, and do commence from the time that the fact was done.

I. **MY** Short and Easy Method with the Deists bears date July 17th, 1697, and was but two sheets of paper, being wrote for the satisfaction of a gentlewoman (though it is addressed as to a man) who had been staggered with the arguments of Deism even to distraction; for though, as she told me, she was not come to be a downright Deist, yet she was not able to answer their arguments, nor to clear up the matter to her own mind; and what had been so often rung in her ears, of the story of Christ being but a fable, like that of Mahomet or the heathen gods, would dart into her thoughts in the midst of her

devotions, even at the holy sacrament; which, said she, if Christianity be a truth, seemed to me to be blasphemous, and that I was provoking God, while I pretended to worship him. This at last wrought so powerfully with her, that she came to abstain from all prayers, even in private; and was in a most deplorable condition, owning that she was often tempted to destroy herself, which she was afraid would be the issue. I found discoursing with her had but little effect, for in that violent discomposure she could not give attention, but would fall out into terrible exclamations, and wishing herself dead, or that she had never been born. I then wrote this letter to her, free from all intricacies, and suited to her capacity; and prevailed with her to copy it in her own hand, thinking that would fix her attention the more, and prevent those wandering thoughts which interrupted her consideration of what was offered to her in discourse. And, by the blessing of God, this had the desired effect; for she came to reason calmly, and at last was fully convinced, as she still remains; and she was able to keep her ground with the Deists by the four marks, which none of the stories they told her of the heathen gods, of Mahomet, or the legends could come up to. Some had the first mark, some the second, and some the third, but all stuck at the fourth, none of them had all the four. And it was by her persuasion, and of some others to whom she shewed my letter, that I was prevailed with to let it be made public. And it meeting with a favourable reception, I enlarged it to four or five sheets in the next edition; and took in the case of the Jews, which made a larger volume.

II. I had several conferences with some Deists upon the argument: and the issue was, they were to find out some fact that was false which had all the four marks. And though they named many, yet none was found that would bear the test. Nor could they find any supposititious book which had these four marks for its veracity, as the holy scriptures have, which commenced from the time they speak of, and were written by the actors of the facts they relate, or by eye and ear-witnesses. And thus the matter has stood these thirteen years, till this Detection is at last come out, and like the mountain so long with child, has brought forth a mouse.

III. His proofs begin p. 14, and the first instance is out of Livy of a decree made at Rome for one day's supplication to Æsculapius, to remove a plague that was in the city.

1. Then he quotes a very modern author, Freinshemius, who wrote a supplement to Livy, and there tells a strange story of a serpent that came into a ship at Epidaurus, and was carried to Rome, where being arrived, it swam into an island in the Tiber, and was no more seen. And they supposing the deity of Æsculapius to be in the serpent, and that the god had chosen this place for a temple to be built to him, did accordingly build a temple in that island for Æsculapius, and the plague ceased. And he says Freinshemius quotes several authors for this; and so he might: no doubt a story may be handed from one to another. But who was the original author? and what cause of knowledge had he? was he an eyewitness of it? or did he dream it? Perhaps he had it from an old woman in a chimney-corner, or out of a romance, or framed it

as such himself. Yet he has the confidence to say, that this has all the four marks.

But suppose this story were true, what would he make of it? Did this serpent speak, and teach the world any doctrine as sent from God? or was it to vouch the mission of any person who pretended to be so sent? I think we need stay no longer with this.

2. His next is, p. 19, of two unknown young men, who charged on the front of the Roman horse against the Latins: and the same night they two, or two such like, were seen at Rome, and told them the Latins were routed. And the Romans fancying these to be Castor and Pollux, built a temple to them, and appointed a yearly procession in memory of the happy conclusion of that war with the Latins. To which I say,

First, That this is told by none who were eye-witnesses, or who lived near the time.

Secondly, Here is nothing but the pure fancy of the Romans that these were Castor and Pollux. For it is not said that these two men told them so.

Thirdly, Suppose the fact true, this was not to confirm any doctrine, or vouch the mission of any prophet or teacher, as sent from God.

If you say that it was a confirmation of the then Roman idolatry, that God suffered such a wonderful thing to be done among them; it will not follow: for greater wonders than this apparition (suppose it true) were done by the magicians in Egypt, and by the Devil when he brought down fire upon Job's cattle: and this apparition to the Romans was not out of the power of the evil spirits to perform, if God so permitted them. Of this see

more in what is said hereafter upon the head of miracles, the last Num. VII. of this book.

3. His next instance is, p. 25, of Sommonocodom, now worshipped in Siam: where he draws a most blasphemous parallel betwixt him and Christ, as to his birth, and several passages of his life. For answer to this I refer you to the letter hereunto annexed from an ingenious friend of mine, whom I desired to search for Father Tachard and Mr. Gervaise, quoted for this story in the Detection, I not having the books, and being not well able at this time to go about and look after them. There you will find that the Siamese do not reckon this Sommonocodom as the founder of their religion: that they neither know when or by whom the book they have of him was written: that they believe no God, but a continual fluxation and transmigration of souls from eternity: that they have no certain account or history even of their own kingdom or their civil affairs: in short, that they are a most stupid and brutal people. And as for the senseless stories they have of their Sommonocodom, without the appearance of truth or any foundation, those you will see in the letter. But from what they tell of Sommonocodom, his being born of a virgin, and forced to fly when a young child to another country from a king that would have destroyed him, and several other passages of our blessed Saviour's life, it is apparent that they have heard of the gospel, or that Christianity was some time in that country, though it is now lost among them, as in other places. But as to the author of the Detection, he is desired to tell us when that book which relates the facts of Sommonocodom was written, and who was the author of it?

Was he a witness of the facts? and has that book been extant ever since? Till he can answer these things he cannot say it has the four marks as our Bible has. But it shews what true pains he has taken to banter and ridicule Christianity, in picking up stories from every corner, which he thinks may blast and confound it: *the Lord rebuke him.*

He says, p. 24, 25, that this Sommonocodom, “after a long expectation of the whole universe, “was born about four hundred years before our “blessed Saviour.” For this he quotes none of his authors; it was a stroke put in by himself, that he might make it a parallel to what I mention in that part I added to the Short Method relating to the Jews, sect. v. p. 104, &c. concerning the general expectation among the Gentiles from east to west, about the time of our Saviour’s coming. This I proved, not from the holy scriptures only, but from the best of the heathen authors themselves, from the sibyls, and the decree of the senate of Rome pursuant to them; and grounded the time of our Saviour’s coming of a Jew to be then born, who should be universal King of the whole earth, upon this general expectation then current among the Romans, as well as throughout all the east; whence the Magi came to worship this King newly born. We have histories of the times four hundred years before Christ; and if there was such a general expectation of the whole universe at that time concerning Sommonocodom, as the Detection says, it is strange that no author in the whole universe should make the least mention of such an expectation of an universal monarch to be born at Siam. Therefore till the Detection produces his vouchers, and others

besides the Siamese, who could not answer for the whole world, we must look upon this as a mere figment of that author's own brains; and which has fully discovered the nonsense and forgery of his Detection, and shews how hard it is for lies to imitate the truth.

4. He next comes to the popish legends, p. 30, and quotes one E. W. who wrote against Dr. Stillingfleet for some miracles wrought by Thomas Cantelupe, bishop of Hereford; and some after he was dead. The only one he names is, p. 31, of a child who fell from a bridge belonging to Conway castle in Wales, into the ditch twenty-eight foot under the bridge, and was taken up dead, as was supposed, but recovered upon prayers to St. Thomas Cantelupe. Now I can tell him of a man who fell from a much higher place, and yet had no hurt at all: was not that a greater miracle? But he goes on, and tells from this E. W. p. 31, 32, how the Virgin Mary appeared to a bishop of Arras with a burning wax candle in her hand in the great church before all the people; and that the candle is still preserved there, and "spends itself, yet loses nothing: that is," says he, "like the bush which Moses saw burn, but "not at all consumed." Here you see the man, and to what end he brings in all these stories! He believes the one no more than the other! He says of that of the "candle, it is no very difficult matter to "give a near guess how this juggle was contrived." And that of Moses he thinks was such another juggle! But, sir, could Moses juggle to make six hundred thousand men believe that he led them through the sea in the manner he tells; that they were fed with manna from heaven; that he brought water out

of the rock before their eyes to quench their thirst? Could Christ juggle to make five thousand hungry men believe he had filled all their bellies with five loaves they saw in his hands and two fishes? that he had raised Lazarus after being four days in the grave? Can all the miracles of Moses and of Christ be juggled off like that of the wax candle? Yes, you think so, and say, p. 38, "that (miracle) of Arras not only exceeds the four marks, but transcends any miracle that was wrought by Christ or his apostles."

Can Christian ears bear this blasphemy! *O thou full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt not thou cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?*

5. This Elymas in the next words falls a raging with all the malice of hell against those who make use of revelation, that is, of the holy scriptures in matter of government, deducing it from God, as from the original, and having his authority; which is here called slavery and popery: and he says, "They both depend upon the same principle, (that is, of revelation,) and whosoever is capable of entertaining heartily any one of these notions, must necessarily fall at last into the other." And I have observed, on the other hand, that whoever is capable of entertaining heartily the notion of all power being in the people, and making them the original of government, fall most commonly, I will not say necessarily, into the other of Deism, so that they are almost convertible terms: for throwing off the authority of God as to government, leads naturally to the laying it aside in religion too, if that may be called religion which has not God for its author.

And for my asserting the authority of God in both, he says, "I am a papist, (ridiculous!) and have "a miscreated understanding." And, p. 39, "These " (priests) are the dogs of hell, that are let loose "from the infernal regions——These are the harpies "that defile with their filthy odious gripes whatever "was designed by God or nature for the pleasure, "health, or welfare of the poor subjected laity." This is always the burden of the song, O these priests! And you see in what a handsome manner he treats them! and how they would be treated in England, if his principles should prevail! And they have sadly prevailed. Pray God stop the progress, and raise labourers who will be faithful in his vineyard; for *the wild boar of the forest doth now root it up, many foxes spoil the vines, and all they that go by pluck off her grapes.*

6. He returns, p. 40, to give another instance of a falsehood that has all the four marks, which is the known story of the pied piper at Hamel, who piped a hundred and thirty children out of town, and led them to a little hill, in the side of which a wide hole opened, into which they all went, and it closed upon them again. But whether this story be true or false, yet he cannot say it has all the four marks; for in the relation which he sets down of it from Versteegan, it is told, p. 41, that as to this of the opening of the hill, and their going into it, there is but one evidence, that is, of a lame boy who lagged behind: this wants the second mark of the fact being done publicly in the face of the world. And if the boy lied, or was mistaken in a fright, there is an end of the whole story. But all the use this author makes of it is, that if it was a cheat, he is sure, as

he says, p. 42, "that the priests had the chiefest "hand in the contrivance;" though there is not a word of a priest in all the story, unless he takes a piper for a priest. But this shews his equality, and how ready he is to do justice to the priesthood.

7. His last instance is p. 43, which leads us to the author of the Detection. It is a noble performance of his own which he quotes, entitled, *Priestcraft in Perfection*, &c. And here he enlarges with intolerable assurance, upon what he there endeavoured to prove, viz. the detection of a forgery of the English divines, in foisting a clause into the twentieth Article of our church: and he has the folly to say, that this detection too has all the four marks. But he has had the mortification since to see the church of England vindicated, and the forgery turned upon himself and partners; and, to increase his torment, done by a priest; which makes the evil spirit that possesses him gnash his teeth; and rage in his impotent malice, being now overcome by those who shall judge him at the last day.

8. These are all the instances brought in the Detection to overthrow the four marks: which he calls, p. 45, *destruere aliena*, to confute these proofs in defence of Christianity. But he promises, *ponere nostra*, to give his proofs for it, in another work of his, soon (or never) to see the light. If he had intended it, he would have given us some specimen of it in this, where he spends much the greatest part of his book in bitter railing and most scurrilous reflections, first upon myself, and then upon all clergy and priesthood: which I think not worth my while to answer.

9. He concludes with personating a Deist, and

telling what he would say, which he does very naturally, thus, p. 47, "That he would so far have entered into a nice and critical disquisition of the matter, weight, and authenticity of the books of the Old and New Testament, as to have rendered them both spurious and incredible; and consequently no competent witnesses of what they relate, either concerning miracles, or any other extraordinary accounts, or supernatural occurrences contained in revealed religion."

This is the work he has been lately about in Holland, with his friend Tolland, (who consecrates the sacrament for his dog!) and other freethinkers, of which I have seen an account from good hands. And they are in quest of some fine old manuscript, which will prove that Jesus was thirty years in Egypt, and more skilled in all the learning of that country than Moses; and that they both did their miracles by magic. I remember an old Jew, with whom I had frequent conversation, after I had given him one of these books of the Deists and Jews, told me that there was such a manuscript concerning Jesus being so long in Egypt, but that they durst not produce it in a Christian country. I asked him if the truth of that manuscript could be vouched by the four marks, which their Old and our New Testament had? He said, No, it could not stand that test, but it might be true for all that. But this author can easily supply the defect, and make it bear the four marks, full as well as these stories to which he applies them. And I would advise him, that when his *Opus Palmare* comes out, (which he has concerted with Toland, Le Clerc, &c. in aid of the book of the Rights, abridged and translated into

French by the latter, with high commendations in his *Bibliothèque Choisie*, to detect the apocryphal books of the New Testament, that is, all of them,) he would take care to fortify his vouchers with the four marks: which will be no difficult task, in the manner he has done it to his Priestcraft in Perfection.

IV. When the Short Method with the Deists came first out, I had verses sent me of hideous blasphemy, wherein our Lord Christ was bantered with diabolical malice.

1. But the first that appeared in print against it was monsieur Le Clerc, before mentioned, in his *Bibliothèque Choisie*, in the year 1706, tome VIII. p. 394, 395. where he treats me with a haughtiness and contempt I did not think worth notice. Had he been a friend to Christianity he would not have affronted any one for appearing on its behalf, though his performance had been weak; but rather have encouraged him, and kindly informed him wherein he had come short, and how to have improved: he would have told him what other topic had been more proper for the proof of Christianity; and would not have run down this, without shewing a better: which he has not done, but referred it to another time, like the author of the Detection.

2. And as others, when they have nothing left to say, he throws the revolution at me——*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* He says I have wrote seditious and scandalous discourses, but names none: so that he may father upon me what he pleases, as others have done. And remember that this was in 1706; so that nothing laid to my charge since can be here meant.

3. But now as to his arguments against the Method with the Deists, the fairest way will be to give you them in his own words, that I be not thought to misrepresent them, or abate any thing of their force. Take them then thus, translated into English.

“ *Pour moi*——For my part I am inclinable to
“ be of Mr. Hody’s opinion, who thinks there were
“ some anniversary diversions in that place, which,
“ being very much frequented by the Jews who in-
“ habited that part of Alexandria which lay on the
“ sea-coast, some people, tenaciously fond of the
“ Greek version, made others believe it was in me-
“ mory of it that these rejoicings were made in the
“ isle of Pharos. Those that have read the Greek
“ mythologists, or even Ovid’s *Fasti*, have often ob-
“ served that there were among the pagans several
“ festivals instituted in memory of some events
“ which never happened, though these festivals
“ were said to bear date immediately from them.
“ Such fables having once obtained credit in men’s
“ minds, these holydays were established by degrees
“ through the artifice of the priests, who made their
“ own advantage by them. And as their beginnings
“ were not committed to history in a generation or
“ two after, the original of them was derived from
“ the very time when the things that were thus
“ commemorated were said to have happened. This
“ is an useful observation against some persons full
“ of blind zeal, not to give it a worse name, and
“ little skilled in history, who make use of these in-
“ stitutions to prove the truth of legends, or even of
“ the sacred history, which stands in no need of
“ such equivocal proofs that are as applicable to

“ falsehood as to truth. There is, I know not
“ whom, who, in comparison of these, despises the
“ strongest proofs of Christianity ; I know not for
“ what end, but I very much suspect it can only
“ be to establish some deceitful traditions, and put
“ them upon the level with the most authentic doc-
“ trines of Christianity, in order to make a profit or
“ advantage by them. The seditious, scandalous,
“ and violent writings of this man cannot allow me
“ to have a better opinion of him. I need not fur-
“ ther characterize an author who seeks to gain a
“ reputation by insulting those who would think it
“ a blemish to their own to lose their time in an-
“ swering him.”

I will not pretend to guess here whom he means that I have insulted : for I will not digress. But here is the full of the argument that is made use of in the Detection, which is nothing else but a comment upon this text. And now we see the combination.

4. I am willing to have as mean an opinion of myself as Mr. Le Clerc or the Detection would have me : and I put not the truth of Christianity upon the issue of any topic I can make use of to demonstrate it. No, *God forbid : let God be true, and every man a liar.* But I may be allowed to stand by that argument which has confirmed me and others in the truth of Christianity, till I see it fairly confuted, and some better given.

5. And I desire Mr. Le Clerc to prove what he charges upon me, that I despise the strongest proofs of Christianity, in comparison of those I have advanced. What other proof have I despised ? What other proof has he named ? And he should have

named that stronger proof at the same time that he endeavoured to overthrow this proof, lest having taken men off from one foundation, and giving them no other to stand upon, he might leave them no foundation at all; and so disengage them quite from all Christianity, and make them errand Deists. And there is more suspicion, by this management, of this being the design, than of my endeavouring to introduce popery or paganism, by shewing such proofs of Christianity, as none of their legends, of the one sort or the other, can pretend to; notwithstanding all the zeal Mr. Le Clerc or the Detection have shewed to make the facts of Christ as fabulous as the other.

6. Therefore, in defence of Christianity, I will shew the failings of Mr. Le Clerc's argument against it, and that by the four marks which he so much despises. First then, the fact of some Jews making others believe that the rejoicings at Pharos was in memory of the Greek version wants all the marks; unless Mr. Le Clerc can shew that the Greek version was a fact done publicly in the face of the world, and can produce a book wrote at the time by the actors or eyewitnesses, and containing the institution of these rejoicings at Pharos, to be perpetually kept up in memory of it.

7. Next, for the Greek mythologists and the *Fasti* of Ovid; they are a plain proof against the facts, and shew that they were related not as truths in fact, but only to express some mythology or moral by such feigned representations, like that of *Æsop's Fables*, or romances, wrote for the same end.

But he says, "That these fables having once obtained credit in men's minds, these holydays were

“ established by degrees, through the artifice of the
“ priests ; and as their beginnings were not com-
“ mitted to history in a generation or two after, the
“ original of them was derived from the very time
“ when the things that were thus commemorated
“ were said to have happened.”

But does he not see that the four marks obviate all these delusions? Their holydays, or commemorative institutions, came on by degrees: they did not commence from the time the facts were said to have been done.

8. In the next place, he wholly gives up the cause, when he says that their beginnings were not committed to history. For then there is no book to be confronted with our holy Bible, which was wrote at the time when the facts therein related were done, and the institutions in memory of them were then made by the very actors of the facts, that is, by Moses and by Christ. And these four marks were thought upon, especially the fourth, on purpose to distinguish the truth of our holy scriptures, and of the facts therein related, from the heathen or popish books of legends. And though Mr. Le Clerc upbraids me with my little skill in history, (wherein I do not contend with him,) yet he sees I have considered the matter so much, that he (with all his historical talents) can find no instance of any fabulous stories which has all these four marks. And besides, I can tell him, that we have in history the beginnings of the heathen feasts, &c. in memory of their gods, and by whom instituted in after-times, and not by these gods themselves, nor related by eyewitnesses.

9. Yet he says many believed these fables. I doubt

it not. It is no news to tell us that false stories may be imposed upon people, and believed by them. But to distinguish these from true facts, and to lead people into a just method of thinking in this most material point, was my humble endeavour in finding out these four marks: which (blessed be God) have yet stood their ground against all the attacks made upon them.

10. I will take leave of Mr. le Clerc at this time, with shewing the good correspondence betwixt him and the author of the book of the Rights. No sooner was that book made public, but Mr. le Clerc thought it worthy a place in his *Bibliothèque Choisie*; and that it might spread, he made an epitome of it, and put it into French, with high commendations of it. In return to which, the men of the Rights translated his French into English, and published it in London, with all due respects to Mr. le Clerc, in a preface.

And in the first Defence of the Rights they forget not how much they owe to Mr. le Clerc, and say,

“ If the laws of modesty allow one to say that in
“ his own defence, which at other times would be
“ unpardonable, the author of the Rights, consider-
“ ing how busy so many pulpiteers, like the crafts-
“ men at Ephesus, are to stir up the people against
“ him as an enemy to their temple and religion,
“ might be excused, if, to take off the edge of the
“ envy, and to allay the force of that prejudice their
“ utmost clamours raise against him, he mentions
“ the character that is given of it by a clergyman
“ celebrated over all the learned world for his deep
“ penetration, exact judgment, and great skill in
“ divinity: but the greater the character is that is

“ given, and the greater the person that gives it,
“ the less he presumes to mention it; and therefore
“ shall only refer the reader to monsieur le Clerc’s
“ *Bibliothèque Choisie*, tom. X. particularly p. 302,
“ 341, 357.”

Thus I leave these gentlemen in one another’s company, commending each other. For their endeavours were the same, to overthrow all revealed religion. In which sense the book of the Rights may well be reckoned among the opposers of the Short Method with the Deists, though it proceeds not by way of direct answer to it.

V. And now, that I may not omit any of the opponents I have had in this cause of Christianity, I will lastly name the Observer, who has put himself into the number, in his paper of the seventh of June last, vol. IX. num. 41.

1. Where first he clears himself from being the author of the Detection, which, he says, was laid upon him: but he vouches for it that it is no atheistical book; and brings this argument, “ that some
“ divines have spoke with as much disregard of the
“ arguments brought from the sibylline oracles.” A decent comparison indeed, when the dispute was concerning the truth of the holy scriptures! In short, he condemns me, and says I have betrayed the cause, and must be a papist, because in all the Short Method I have not said that the pope is antichrist! And he concludes, “ So that as Mr. Leslie has managed the matter, I cannot help thinking that our
“ holy religion is little beholden to such an advocate.”

2. But he has attempted that which neither Mr. le Clerc nor the Detection have ventured upon;

that is, to give his proofs for Christianity, since he likes not that of the four marks; and his proofs are these:

First, Natural conscience and reason; and the depravation of these, of which, he says, every man is sensible. Then to ask a pagan or a deist whence comes this depravation; and they cannot tell: but the scripture tells, by the fall of Adam; therefore the scriptures must be true, and a divine revelation, because they tell us that which we could not have known without them.

Secondly, The agreeableness of the doctrine to the nature of God, and exalting morality.

Thirdly, Its being contrary to the corrupt nature of man against ungodliness and worldly lusts, &c.

Fourthly, That by this way of proof it depends not on philosophy or learning, and stands not upon human testimony or authority.

Fifthly, The clear evidence that the pope is anti-christ, from 2 Thess. ii. 4, &c.

As to the first, we find not Christians agreed about original sin, and its effects upon us: and I doubt a Deist would first desire a proof of the authority of the scriptures, before he believed that relation of it which they give.

As to the second and third, the moral philosophers would contend for their precepts of virtue: and the Brachmans would outdo you in mortification of the flesh; not to name the papists, lest you should call me such.

And for the fourth, there is no way to know the truth of facts, but what is human, or by revelation; and you rejecting what is human, consequently must

trust to miracles for the conversion of a Deist: unless your fifth proof of antichrist will do it!

3. But, sir, you go altogether upon the doctrine, and neglect the facts; whereas Christ appealed to the facts for a proof of his doctrine: *Believe me for the works' sake*: and, *If I had not done such works, you had had no sin*, though you had not believed me; John x. 25, 37, 38. xiv. 11. xv. 24.

And as to the doctrine, you go only upon that of morality: is Christianity then nothing but morality? sir, you have not been so taught, if you are a right presbyterian.

The Christian faith is, to believe in Christ as having made satisfaction for our sins by his perfect obedience, and the sacrifice of himself upon the cross: and how shall a Deist have this faith, but by being convinced that Christ is this Saviour of the world? And how shall he know that, but by his works testifying that he was sent of God for this end? And how shall he be satisfied of the truth of the facts, but by such human evidence as I have given, and as all other facts are proved? unless (as I said) you would have a miracle to convince him. I doubt this method has made many Deists, at least has confirmed them.

VI. I remember soon after the Short Method came out, some dissenting preachers desired a conference with me upon the subject, and they treated me much more civilly than the Observator: they expressed a liking of what I had done, but told me withal that I had omitted the strongest proof for Christianity. I took it very kindly, as I ought, and prayed them to tell it me, that I might add it in the next edition. They said it was the self-evidence of

the scriptures, from the dignity of the matter, and majesty of the style, beyond any other writing. I told them I was fully convinced of it in my own mind, and found that comfort and exultation in reading them, infinitely beyond any other book or writing in the world; and that I doubted not it would convince any who seriously attended to it: but that I had to do with Deists who were scoffers, and trampled these pearls under their feet; and therefore that some other topic must be found out for them, to persuade them by the plain principles of reason, to which only they appealed, and of which only indeed they were capable. For they had not yet experienced that *the word of God is quick, and* Heb. iv. 12. *powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* And reading the scriptures with prejudice, and minds unprepared, they felt not within themselves, *That the law of the Lord is an undefiled law, con-* Ps. xix. 7, *verting the soul: that the statutes of the Lord are* 8. *right, and rejoice the heart: that the commandment of the Lord is pure, and giveth light unto the eyes:* this appears only to those who are religiously exercised in the holy scriptures.

Then that text was urged to me, 1 John ii. 27. *You need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things.* I answered, that this was spoke only to believers: as it is said, ver. 20. *Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things:* after which immediately follows, ver. 21. *I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know*

it, &c. Several other texts of the like nature were quoted, but they were all found to terminate only in believers. I then shewed how differently St. Paul argued with the Athenians, Acts xvii. 24, &c. He took his topics from providence, and the works of God, from principles allowed by themselves; yet he quoted no scripture to them, but he quoted Aratus, one of their own poets, who said, *We are the offspring of God*: whence the apostle reasoned with them that the Godhead could not be like the images they made of gold, silver, &c.; but he reasoned with the Jews out of the scriptures. One said he was satisfied every one was convinced of the truth of the scriptures who read them, though they would not confess it. I told him I was too well convinced there were Deists in the world; and I durst not venture upon that argument with them, to tell them I was sure they did believe; in regard not only to what they would have thought of me, but to the cause, for which I could produce no other proof but what they knew to be utterly false. I will do that justice to the company I was in, that all, except this one old man, did at last agree with me, that such topics were not to be used with Deists.

VII. I have now done with the Detection, and all the adversaries I have heard of who have appeared in print against the Short Method with the Deists; and I hope its force is not abated by all these objections made to it.

I have quite overlooked all the impertinence in the Detection, his ribaldry and Billingsgate against me, which has made my answer to him so short; for by this I have cut off much the greatest part of his book. He spends to p. 14. upon these topics, be-

fore he comes to the argument, and interlards them often afterwards, which has swelled his performance to such a bulk.

But to give the reader a taste what stress is to be laid upon his most positive assertions, I will name but one, with which he fills up p. 28. repeating it over and over again with the utmost assurance, viz. that both universities of Oxford and Cambridge have made collections for me: he says, he would prove it, “if it had not been as flagrant and notorious as our acts of parliament or public proclamations.” Now is it not strange that what is so flagrant and notorious to all the nation (if this gentleman’s word may be taken) should not be known to the person concerned? For I am very positive that he never received any such collections from both or either of the universities; and I doubt not, if collections had been made, a method would have been taken to have had them conveyed to him for whom they were intended: after this, I suppose nobody will put me to disprove any facts related by this author.

THE
LETTER
ABOUT
SOMMONOCODOM.

“SIR,

“**I** HAVE at your desire looked into some late
“accounts of the kingdom of Siam, and compared
“what they relate of the pretended god Sommono-
“codom, with his history, as delivered by that truly
“pious and learned adversary of yours, who has
“so ingeniously proved you a popish missionary;
“though were his logic orthodox, I think you ought
“as soon to be taken for one of the ancient Flamins,
“or modern Talapoins. It is obvious to the most
“superficial reader, that that fable must be either
“the foundation or corruption of our gospel; and
“which of these is the most probable may by the
“application of your four rules to each of them be
“quickly discovered. As far therefore as I can ap-
“prehend, the only inference to be naturally drawn
“from this system of modern paganism, is to shew
“that Christendom was once of a greater extent
“than it is at present; that the gospel was preach-
“ed in the remotest parts of the east before the
“French or Portuguese missions; and that so pro-
“digious a depravation of human reason stands in
“great need of being once more set right. I am
“willing to believe that all the particulars men-
“tioned in the Detection are so many articles of

“ the Siamese Creed; though there are some of them,
“ which I have not been able to meet with either
“ in pere Tachard or two other authors, of as good
“ or better credit, and those are l’abbé Choisy,
“ who went as assistant to monsieur Chaumont, the
“ first ambassador sent by the French king to Siam,
“ and monsieur la Loubere, who went afterwards
“ thither, with the character of envoy extraordi-
“ nary: perhaps what is omitted in these may be
“ found in monsieur Gervaise, whose book I have
“ formerly read, but could not now procure. I must
“ however take notice, that our historian has, as
“ most authors do, taken care to relate only what
“ might serve to his own purpose, which was vi-
“ sibly no other than to ground the worship of Jesus
“ Christ, and that of Sommonocodom on the same
“ degree of probability; and therefore he has pru-
“ dently omitted such pretended miracles of the lat-
“ ter, as could only serve to make the whole story
“ ridiculous to a superlative degree. Among these,
“ I suppose, most people will rank the two that fol-
“ low: and yet they seem better able to bear the
“ test of your rules than any of the rest. Sommo-
“ nocodom once flying a paper kite, (an exercise not
“ altogether unknown in England,) found the height
“ and inequality of certain trees to be a great ob-
“ stacle to his pleasure, upon which he commanded
“ the tops of those trees to fall even: they instantly
“ obeyed: flying of kites has been ever since a so-
“ lemn diversion among the Siamese, I mean those
“ of the greatest authority and distinction; and to
“ favour them in it, the trees continue still even.
“ Another time, Sommonocodom being upon an ex-
“ pedition that required haste, took a stride from

“ the isle of Ceylon to the kingdom of Siam, which
“ are not above twelve hundred miles asunder, nor
“ much less, if our maps are not very defective : to
“ prove the truth of this, they shew us the print of
“ both his feet ; that which is to be seen in Ceylon
“ is still on the top of a high mountain ; that of
“ Siam is on a rock, now almost even with the
“ plain, though a mountain once as high as the
“ other, having sunk under the mighty weight of
“ the deity. It is indeed remarkable, that this print
“ of the foot does not shew it to have been above
“ four or five times bigger than one of ours, which
“ disproportion to so large a step would be a suffi-
“ cient ground to one of our Christian philosophers
“ to question the truth of the fact ; and even in
“ Siam, where the greatest wits are less scrupulous,
“ there were those alive in 1688, who affirmed that
“ monument not to be of above ninety years’ stand-
“ ing ; yet the king and all his subjects, clergy and
“ laity, paid it an extraordinary veneration. Such
“ instances as these may serve for a taste of the In-
“ dian penetration and judgment in matters of reli-
“ gion ; and yet they are much of the same pitch in
“ what relates to arts and sciences : their histories
“ are all either barren, or filled up with adventures
“ too gross to find place in our romances ; truth,
“ reason, and nature, are what they mind least, they
“ think sticking close to any of them to be a mark
“ of a servile genius, that wants fertility and inven-
“ tion ; their roving imagination is continually em-
“ ployed in quest of wonders, and, when they have
“ done, they will assert with the greatest air of con-
“ viction the most extravagant absurdities. Thus
“ one of the chief ministers of the king of Siam be-

“ ing sent by his master to congratulate monsieur
“ Chaumont, the French ambassador, upon his arri-
“ val on their coasts, he presently claimed acquaint-
“ ance with him, putting him very seriously in mind
“ how above a thousand years before he had been
“ sent by the then king of France to conclude an al-
“ liance with the crown of Siam: the mandarin did
“ in this compliment allude to the transmigration
“ of souls, the first principle of their religion; which
“ being universally believed gives every one who
“ pleases an opportunity of relating whatever comes
“ uppermost of the various accidents which have be-
“ fallen him in all the bodies he has passed through,
“ and you may easily guess it would be very hard
“ to disprove him; but indeed they are generally
“ too well bred to offer at it, and as ready to believe
“ the wildest chimeras of others as they are to vent
“ their own. The Talapoins never fail to make
“ their own advantage of this disposition; and by
“ the fabulous notions with which they fill the peo-
“ ple's brains preserve themselves in great credit,
“ both their persons and habitations being held so
“ inviolable, that even the boldest tyrants and usurp-
“ ers have scrupled openly to infringe their rights;
“ a remarkable instance of which happened in the
“ last age. The chief minister of state, or as others
“ say, a prince of the blood, having formed a con-
“ spiracy against his sovereign, broke into the pa-
“ lace with armed force, and obliged the unfortu-
“ nate monarch to fly for shelter to a neighbouring
“ convent of Talapoins, where he remained in per-
“ fect safety till the usurper had with much ado
“ wheedled him out; and when he had done, got it
“ declared in a great convention of mandarins, that

“ he had forfeited his right by flying, and that his
 “ abandoning the seat of the empire was quitting
 “ the government: in consequence of which vote he
 “ stepped himself into the throne.

“ These general observations on the genius and
 “ temper of the people may not be improper; but to
 “ speak a little more particularly of Sommonocodom
 “ and his worship. Should any Talapoin go about
 “ to persuade me to adore him, I should desire some
 “ more satisfactory evidence of the truth of that
 “ doctrine than they usually give. The language
 “ in which it is preserved is different from the vul-
 “ gar tongue, but they cannot inform us whether it
 “ ever was a living language, nor where nor when
 “ they learned it, the few books they have bear nei-
 “ ther date nor name: they are in the same uncer-
 “ tainty as to their civil laws and government; Siam
 “ and Laos, a neighbouring kingdom, derive their
 “ origin mutually from one another. Neither do
 “ their most authentic writings agree on the chief
 “ circumstances of the birth, life, and death of their
 “ Messiah. Sometimes they make him son to a king
 “ of Ceylon by his lawful queen called Mania, or
 “ Maria, and tell you that he had a thousand bro-
 “ thers, not born after the usual manner, but all
 “ sprung out of the impurities which accompanied
 “ his birth. At another time they will have him
 “ born of a virgin, who, living a retired life in an
 “ impenetrable forest, was during her prayers im-
 “ pregnated by the beams of the sun, and after-
 “ wards delivered without pain. They agree as
 “ little about the place, which some say was on the
 “ banks of a great lake between Siam and Camboya,
 “ others in the isle of Ceylon. After his birth the

“ fortunetellers were consulted by his father, king
“ Taousout, to know what the fate of his son would
“ be : they told him that he would be emperor of
“ the whole universe, or, if he chose to abandon
“ the world, and become a Talapoin, he should at
“ last arrive to the Nireupan, or sovereign degree of
“ felicity : and here I must observe, contrary to
“ what the author of the Detection is pleased to
“ assert, that Sommonocodom is not pretended to be
“ the founder of the Siamese religion, or the insti-
“ tutor of their ascetic orders. They hold the one
“ and the other to be as ancient as the world, that
“ is, eternal. For they have not so much as the
“ notion of the first and supreme Being which we
“ call God, and worship as the Creator and sove-
“ reign Lord of all things. Their scheme in short
“ is this : there is a continual transmigration of
“ souls from one body into another, beast, fish, or
“ man indifferently. The soul that behaves itself
“ well in one station meets its reward by being
“ placed next time in a better ; and sin is punished
“ after the same method ; yet all this is not sup-
“ posed to happen through the will and direction of
“ any overruling providence, but to proceed from a
“ fatal necessity, or rather from the nature and
“ essence of virtue and vice, as the flame ascends,
“ and the loadstone attracts iron. But when a soul,
“ after the revolution of many ages, has in all its
“ various habitations performed its part so well as
“ to have acquired a fixed and unalterable habit of
“ virtue, it becomes Nireupan, that is, it is freed
“ from the troubles of this world, and discharged
“ from all further attendance upon matter, and
“ thenceforward enjoys an eternal rest, without care

“ or concern for what passes among men. Of these
“ perfect souls they reckon in all but four, of which
“ Sommonocodom was the last, who, notwithstanding
“ his incapacity of doing good or hurt, is still,
“ say they, to be worshipped, till another, whom
“ they daily expect, appears. Such were the gods
“ whom Epicurus allowed, that he might avoid the
“ scandalous name of Atheist, and whom he would
“ have to be adored for no other reason than the
“ excellency of their own nature. And it was
“ perhaps from these Indians that the Stoics borrowed
“ their notion of virtue being its own reward, though by their way of explaining it they
“ made it yet more absurd. To return to our story;
“ Sommonocodom resolved to become a Talapoin, in
“ which pious undertaking he had for companions
“ ten thousand young men, all princes, all of his
“ own kindred. One of his first acts of heroic virtue
“ was to pluck out both his eyes, and then kill
“ his wife and two children, to satisfy the hunger of
“ some of his disciples. How to reconcile this action
“ with their own law (which, not content to condemn
“ murder as the greatest of crimes, looks upon all
“ killing, even of a beast, to be extremely sinful)
“ may perhaps be somewhat difficult: but this was
“ not the only blood he shed; for, being transformed
“ into a monkey, he killed a strange monster that
“ was coming to devour a whole city; but this cost
“ him dear, as we shall afterwards find. Seeing himself
“ violently persecuted by his wicked brother
“ or kinsman Thevetar, (for authors are not agreed
“ how nearly they stood related,) he began to examine
“ his conscience, that he might discover what
“ he had done to deserve such ill usage; for it is in

“ Siam a fundamental doctrine, that every action,
“ good or bad, must necessarily meet with a pro-
“ portionable reward : and he remembered that be-
“ ing once in his cups he had thrown a small stone
“ at a Talapoin, and given him a slight wound, for
“ which he had been punished during four hundred
“ ninety-nine generations, and had besides lain a
“ considerable time in hell. I believe you may by
“ this time be tired with such a rhapsody of non-
“ sense, and therefore I shall come to a conclusion
“ of Sommonocodom’s life. His death is related in
“ two different manners : some tell you, that having
“ lived to his eighty-second year he died of the
“ colic, which he got by eating of swine’s flesh ; and
“ this was a judgment upon him for his monkey
“ trick in killing the monster mentioned before, the
“ soul of that monster having been since transferred
“ into that very swine : others say he killed himself,
“ and charitably distributed his own flesh amongst
“ a parcel of ravenous beasts. It is not, I think,
“ our business to examine which tradition is the
“ best grounded, and for the Siamese, they never
“ quarrel about the matter. Let the manner be
“ what it will, they place it five hundred and forty-
“ four years before the birth of our Saviour, and
“ from thence pretend to number their years. But
“ monsieur la Loubere, an author of great credit,
“ who concludes upon very good grounds there never
“ was any such man in *rerum natura*, and monsieur
“ Cassini, the famous astronomer, are both of opin-
“ ion that this can only be an arbitrary epoch de-
“ rived from some remarkable conjunction of the
“ planets which happened at that time, and might
“ have been reckoned a proper beginning for astro-

“ nomical calculations. Whether this opinion be
 “ true or no, till the Siamese can produce some
 “ monuments or records, good or bad, civil or eccle-
 “ siastical, of what happened among them or any-
 “ where else, during the space of one thousand three
 “ hundred years from the pretended death of their
 “ god till the foundation of their monarchy, which
 “ was but about nine hundred years ago, I shall by
 “ the benefit of your rules preserve myself from
 “ embracing their religion. Could a chasm of half
 “ that time be found in our ecclesiastical history, I
 “ am apt to believe we should have but few Chris-
 “ tians, in so discerning an age as ours. I cannot
 “ take my leave without putting you in mind to de-
 “ sire your antagonist, that after having so com-
 “ pletely demolished the arguments with which you
 “ undertake to support Christianity, he would at
 “ length produce his own, and at the same time be
 “ pleased to tell us what the use of miracles should
 “ be; for I have the charity to believe him too much
 “ a Christian to deny there ever was any such thing,
 “ and too much a philosopher not to admit of that
 “ established axiom, *Deus et natura nihil agunt*
 “ *frustra*. Had I the honour of his acquaintance,
 “ being myself a little inclined to scepticism, I would
 “ advise him as a friend not to betray the same dis-
 “ ingenuity in arguing against revelation that he
 “ and others so often complain of in those who con-
 “ tend for it. I am, &c.”

September 21st, 1710.

THE
TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY
DEMONSTRATED,
IN
A DIALOGUE
BETWIXT
A CHRISTIAN AND A DEIST.

WHEREIN THE CASE OF THE JEWS IS LIKEWISE CONSIDERED.

1. *Christian.* IT is strange you should stand it out so against your own happiness, and employ your whole wit and skill to work in yourself a disbelief of any future rewards or punishments; only that you may live easy, as you think, in this world, and enjoy your pleasures. Which yet you cannot enjoy free and undisturbed from the fear of those things that are to come, the event of which you pretend not to be sure of: and therefore are sure of a life full of trouble that admits not of any consolation, and of a miserable and wretched death, according to the utmost that you yourself propose.

Deist. How can you say that, when I propose to live without any fear of those things? I fear not hell, and I have discarded the expectation of heaven, because I believe neither.

Chr. Are you sure there are no such things?

Deist. That is a negative, and I pretend not to prove it.

Chr. Then you must remain in a doubt of it; and what a condition is it to die in this doubt, when the issue is eternal misery! And this is the utmost, by your own confession, that you can propose to yourself; therefore I called yours a disbelief rather than a belief of any thing; it is we Christians who believe, you Deists only disbelieve.

And if the event should prove as you would have it, and that we should all be annihilated at our death, we should be in as good a condition as you: but, on the other side, if the event should prove as we expect it, then you are eternally miserable, and we eternally happy; therefore one would think it the wisest part to take our side of the question.

Especially considering that those poor pleasures, for the sake of which you determine yourselves against us, are but mere amusements, and no real enjoyments; nay, we had better be without them than have them, even as to this life itself: is not temperance and a healthful constitution more pleasant than those pains and aches, sick head and stomach, which are the inseparable companions of debauchery and excess, besides the clouding our reason, and turning sottish in our understanding?

Deist. We take pleasure in them for the time, and mind not the consequences——But, however, a man cannot believe as he pleases; and therefore, notwithstanding all the glorious and all the terrible things you speak of, it makes nothing to me, unless you can evidently prove them to be so. And you must still leave me to judge for myself, after you have done all you can.

Chr. What I have said is only to dispose you to

hear me impartially, and not to be prejudiced against your own happiness both here and hereafter.

2. *Deist.* Well, without more prefacing, the case is this: I believe a God as well as you; but for revelation, and what you call the holy scriptures, I may think they were wrote by pious and good men, who might take this method of speaking as from God, and in his name, as supposing that those good thoughts came from him, and that it would have a greater effect upon the people; and might couch their morals under histories of things supposed to be done, as several of the wise heathens have taken this course, in what they told of Jupiter and Juno, and the rest of their gods and goddesses; but as to the facts themselves, I believe the one no more than the other; or that all the facts in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or in *Æsop's Fables* were true.

Chr. You seem willing by this to preserve a respectful esteem and value for the holy scriptures, as being wrote by pious and good men, and with a good design to reform the manners of men.

But your argument proves directly against the purpose for which you brought it, and makes the penmen of the scriptures to be far from good men, to be not only cheats and impostors, but blasphemers, and an abomination before God: for such these same scriptures frequently call those who presume to speak as from God, and in his name, when he had not sent them, and given them authority so to do; and the law in the scriptures condemns such to be stoned to death as blasphemers.

It was not so with the heathen; their moralists did not use the style of *Thus saith the Lord*; and their philosophers opposed and wrote against one

another without any offence: for all the matter was which of them could reason best; they pretended to no more.

And for the facts of the fables of their gods, themselves did not believe them, and have wrote the mythology or moral which was intended by them.

Deist. But many of the common people did believe the facts themselves; as it is with the common people now in the church of Rome, who believe the most senseless and ridiculous stories in their books of legends to be as true as the gospel, though the more wise among them call them only pious frauds, to increase the devotion of the people: and so we think of your gospel itself, and all the other books you say were wrote by men divinely inspired; we will let you keep them to cajole the mob, but when you would impose them upon men of sense we must come to the test with you.

Chr. That is what I desire; and to see whether there are no more evidences to be given for the truth of Christianity, that is, of the holy scriptures, than are given for the legends and all the fabulous stories of the heathen gods: and if so, I will give up my argument, and confess that it is not in my power to convince you.

Deist. I cannot refuse to join issue with you upon this. To begin then, I desire to know your evidences for the truth of your scriptures, and the facts therein related.

3. *Chr.* If the truth of the book and the facts therein related be proved, I suppose you will not deny the doctrines to be true.

Deist. No: for if I saw such miracles with my

eyes as are said to have been done by Moses and Christ, I could not think of any greater proof to be given that such an one was sent of God; therefore if your Bible be true as to the facts, I must believe it in the doctrine too. But there are other books which pretend to give us revelations from God, and we must know which of these is true.

Chr. To distinguish this book from all others which pretend to give revelations from God, these four marks or rules were set down.

I. That the facts related be such of which men's outward senses, their eyes and ears, may judge.

[This cuts off enthusiastical pretences to revelation, and opinions which may be propagated in the dark, and, like the tares, not known till they are grown up, and the first beginning of them not discovered.]

II. That these facts be done openly in the face of the world.

III. That not only public monuments, but outward institutions and actions should be appointed and perpetually kept up in memory of them.

IV. That these institutions to be observed should commence from the time that the facts were done; and consequently that the book wherein these facts and institutions are recorded should be written at the time, and by those who did the facts, or by eye and ear-witnesses; for that is included in this mark, and is the main part of it, to prevent false stories being coined in after-ages of things done many hundred years before, which none alive can disprove. Thus Moses wrote his five books containing his actions and institutions; and those of Christ were wrote by his disciples, who were eye and ear-wit-

nesses of what they related. And particular care was taken of this, as you may see Acts i. 21, 22. upon choosing one to supply the place of Judas; *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, until that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be witness with us of his resurrection.* And St. John begins his First Epistle thus: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled—That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.*

I have explained this fourth mark, because the author of the Detection, either wilfully or ignorantly, seems not to understand it. And this alone overthrows all the stories he has told, which he would make parallel to the facts of Moses and of Christ; and therefore alleges that they have all these four marks. But he must begin again, and own that these four marks still stand an irrefragable proof of the truth of any fact which has them all; till he can produce a book which was wrote by the actors or eyewitnesses of the facts it relates; and shew that such facts, having the other three marks, have been detected to be false: which when he can do, I will give him up these four marks as an insufficient proof, and own I was mistaken in them. But hitherto they have stood the test; for he himself will not say he has produced any such book in all his Detection.

If he says that facts may be true, though no such book can be produced for them, and though

they have not all the aforesaid marks, I will easily grant it: but all I contend for is, that whatever fact has all these four marks cannot be false. For example, could Moses have persuaded six hundred thousand men that he had led them through the sea in the manner related in Exodus, if it had not been true? if he could, it would have been a greater miracle than the other. The like of their being fed forty years in the wilderness without bread, by manna rained down to them from heaven. The like of Christ's feeding five thousand at a time with five loaves: and so of all the rest. The two first marks secure from any cheat or imposture at the time the facts were done; and the two last marks secure equally from any imposition in after-ages; because this book, which relates these facts, speaks of itself as written at that time by the actors or eyewitnesses; and as commanded by God to be carefully kept and preserved to all generations, and read publicly to all the people at stated times, as is commanded, Deut. xxxi. 10, 11, 12. and was practised, Josh. viii. 34, 35. Neh. viii. &c. And the institutions appointed in this book were to be perpetually observed from the day of the institution for ever among these people, in memory of the facts, as the passover, Exod. xii. and so of the rest. Now suppose this book to have been forged a thousand years after Moses, would not every one say when it first appeared, We never heard of this book before, we know of no such institutions as of a passover, or circumcision, or sabbaths, and the many feasts and fasts therein appointed; of a tribe of Levi, and a tabernacle wherein they were to serve in such an order of priesthood, &c.: therefore this book must

be an errant forgery, for it wants all those marks it gives of itself as to its own continuance, and of those institutions it relates? No instance can be shewn, since the world began, of any book, so circumstantiated, that was a forgery, and passed as truth upon any people. I think it impossible, and therefore that the four marks are still an invincible proof of the truth of that book and those facts wherein all these marks do meet.

But since I am come upon this subject again, I will endeavour to improve it, and give four other marks, some of which no fact, however true, ever had or can have, but the fact of Christ alone. Thus while I support the fact of Moses, I set that of Christ above him, as the Lord is above the servant. And the Jews being herein principally concerned, I will consider their case likewise as we go along. Therefore I add this fifth mark as peculiar to our Bible, and to distinguish it from all other histories which relate facts formerly done.

V. That the book which relates the facts contain likewise the law of that people to whom it belongs, and be their statute-book, by which their causes are determined. This will make it impossible for any to coin or forge such a book, so as to make it pass upon any people. For example, if I should forge a statute-book for England, and publish it next term, could I make all the judges, lawyers, and people believe that this was their true and only statute-book, by which their causes had been determined these many hundred years past? They must forget their old statute-book, and believe that this new book, which they never saw or heard of before, was that same old book which has been pleaded in West-

minster-hall for so many ages, which has been so often printed, and the originals of which are now kept in the Tower, to be consulted as there is occasion.

Deist. I grant that to be impossible: but how do you apply it?

Chr. It is evident as to the books of Moses, which are not only a history of the Jews, but their very statute-book, wherein their municipal law, as well civil as ecclesiastical, was contained.

Deist. This is so indeed as to the books of Moses, to which they always appealed; *to the law and to the testimony*: and they had no other statute-book. But this will not agree to your gospel, which is no municipal law, nor any civil law at all, and no civil causes were tried by it.

Chr. The law was given to the Jews as a distinct and separate people from all other nations upon the earth; and therefore was a municipal law particularly for that nation only of the Jews: but Christianity was to extend to all the nations of the earth, and Christians were to be gathered out of all nations; and therefore the gospel could not be a municipal law as to the civil rights to all nations, who had each their own municipal laws. This could not be, without destroying all the municipal laws in the world, of every nation whatsoever: and then none could be a Christian, without at the same time becoming a rebel to the government where he lived. This would have been for Christ to have immediately set up for universal and temporal king of all the world, as the Jews expected of their Messiah, and therefore would have made Christ a king. But he instructed them in the spiritual nature of his

kingdom, that it was *not of this world*, nor did respect their temporal or civil matters: which therefore he left in the same state he found them, and commanded their obedience to their civil governors, though heathen, *not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake*. And as to the law of Moses, he left the Jews still under it, as to their civil concerns, so far as the Romans, under whose subjection they then were, would permit them. As Pilate said to them, *Ye have a law: and, judge ye him according to your law*.

But the gospel was given as the spiritual and ecclesiastical law to the church whithersoever dispersed through all nations; for that did not interfere with their temporal laws as to civil government. And in this the fifth mark is made stronger to the gospel than even to the law. For it is easier to suppose that any forgery might creep into the municipal law of a particular nation, than that all the nations whither Christianity is spread should conspire in the corruption of the gospel, which to all Christians is of infinitely greater concern than their temporal laws. And without such a concert of all Christian nations and people supposed, no such forgery could pass undiscovered in the gospel, which is spread as far as Christianity, and read daily in their public offices.

Deist. But I say it is discovered, as appears by the multitude of your various lections.

Chr. That cannot be called a forgery; it is nothing but such mistakes as may very easily happen, and are almost unavoidable, in so many copies as have been made of the gospel, before printing was known. And considering the many translations of

it into several languages, where the idioms are different, and the phrases may be mistaken, together with the natural slips of amanuenses, it is much more wonderful that there are no more various lections, than that there are so many.

But in this appears the great providence of God in the care the Christians took of this, that they have marked every the least various lection, even syllabical, and that among all these there is not found one which makes any alteration either in the facts or in the doctrines. So that instead of an objection, this becomes a strong confirmation of the truth and certainty of the gospel; which stands thus perfectly clear of so much as any doubt concerning the facts or the doctrines therein related.

But I will now proceed to a stronger evidence than even this, and all that has been said before; which I have made the sixth mark, and that is the topic of prophecy.

VI. The great fact of Christ's coming into the world was prophesied of in the Old Testament from the beginning to the end, as it is said, Luke i. 70, *by all the holy prophets, which have been since the world began.*

This evidence no other fact ever had. For there was no prophecy of Moses, but Moses himself did prophesy of Christ, Deut. xviii. 15. (applied Acts iii. 22, 23, 24.) and sets down the several promises given of him. The first was to Adam, immediately after the fall, (Gen. iii. 15.) where he is called *the seed of the woman*, but not of the man, because he was to have no man for his father, though he had a woman to his mother. And of none other can this be said,

nor that he should *bruise the serpent's head*, that is, overcome the Devil and all his power.

He was again promised to Abraham, as you may see, Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. See this applied Gal. iii. 16.

Jacob did expressly prophesy of him, with a mark of the time when he should come, and calls him *Shiloh*, or *He that was to be sent*, Gen. xlix. 10.

Balaam prophesied of him by the name of *the Star of Jacob*, and *Sceptre of Israel*, Num. xxiv. 17.

Daniel calls him *the Messiah the Prince*; and tells the time of his coming and of his death, Dan. ix. 25, 26.

It was foretold that he should be born of a Virgin, Isai. vii. 14; in the city of Bethlehem, Micah v. 2; of the seed of Jesse, Isai. xi. 1, 10. His low estate and sufferings are particularly described, Psal. xxii. and Isai. liii. and his resurrection, Ps. xvi. 10. That he should sit upon the throne of David for ever, and *be called Wonderful, The mighty God, The Prince of Peace*, Isai. ix. 6, 7. *The Lord our righteousness*, Jer. xxxiii. 16. *Jehovah Tsidkenu*, (an incommunicable name given to none but the great God alone,) and *Immanuel*, that is, *God with us*, Isai. vii. 14. And David, whose Son he was, according to the flesh, called him his *Lord*, Psal. cx. 1.

The cause of his sufferings is said to be for the sins of the people, and not for himself, Isai. liii. 4, 5, 6. Dan. ix. 26.

And as to the time of his coming, it is expressly said (to the confusion of the Jews now) that it was to be before *the sceptre should depart from Judah*, Gen. xlix. 10; in the *second temple*, Hag. ii. 7, 9;

within *seventy weeks* of the building of it, Dan. ix. 24. that is, (according to the prophetical known style of a day for a year,) within four hundred and ninety years after.

1. From these and many more prophecies of the Messiah, or Christ, his coming was the general expectation of the Jews from the beginning, but more especially about the time in which it was foretold he should come; when several false Messiahs did appear among them. And this expectation still remains with them, though they confess that the time foretold by all the prophets for his coming is past.

But what I have next to offer will be more strange to you. You may say it was natural for the Jews to expect their Messiah, who was prophesied of in their book of the law, and was to be a Jew, and king of all the earth. But what had the Gentiles to do with this? there were no prophecies to them.

Therefore what I have to shew you is, that these prophecies of the Messiah were likewise to the Gentiles: for it is said that he should be the expectation of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews; and, Gen. xlix. 10, that *the gathering of the people* (or nations) should *be to him*. In the Vulgar it is rendered *expectatio Gentium*, the expectation of the Gentiles. He is called *the desire of all nations*, Hag. ii. 7: and I will shew you the general expectation the Gentiles had of his coming about the time that he did come.

They knew him by the name of the East; their tradition was, that the East should prevail, *ut valesceret Oriens*, as I will shew you presently. But first let me tell you, that the holy scripture often

alludes to him under this denomination. The blood of the great expiatory sacrifice was to be sprinkled towards the east, Lev. xvi. 14. to shew whence the true expiatory sacrifice should come: and he is thus frequently styled in the prophets. Zech. iii. 8. it is said, according to the Vulgar, *I will bring forth my servant the East*: and, chap. vi. 12. behold *the man whose name is the East*: our English renders it in both places *the Branch*, for the Hebrew word bears both senses: but the Greek renders it Ἀνατολή, which we translate *the Dayspring*, Luke i. 78. and put on the margin *Sunrising*, or *Branch*. The Vulgar has it *Oriens ex alto*, *the East*, or *Sunrising from on high*. He is called *the Sun of righteousness*, Mal. iv. 2. And it is said, Isai. lx. 3. *the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising*.

2. Now, sir, how literally was this fulfilled in the magi (generally supposed to be kings) coming from the east, led by a star which appeared to them in the east, to worship Christ when he was born, and to bring presents unto him as unto a king? as it is told in the second of St. Matthew.

Deist. Why do you quote St. Matthew to me? you know we make no more of him than of one of your legend-writers, and believe this story no more than that these three kings are now buried at Cologne.

3. *Chr*. You make great use of the legends, and answer every thing by them; and I confess they are the greatest affront to Christianity, and (if possible) a disproof of it, as it must be to those who will place them upon the same foot with the holy Bible, as too many do in the church of Rome, and cry, We

have the authority of the church for both; and they are taught to receive the holy scriptures upon the authority of the church only: but my business is not with them now: I shall only say, that when they can bring such evidences for the truth of their legends, or for any particular fact in them, as I do for the truth of the holy scriptures, and in particular for the fact of Christ, then I will believe them.

Deist. Will you believe nothing that has not all these evidences you produce?

4. *Chr.* Far from it: for then I must believe nothing but this single fact of Christ; because no other fact in the world, no not of all those recorded in holy scriptures, has all these evidences which the fact of Christ has; and so God has thought fitting that this great fact above all other facts, of the greatest glory to God and importance to mankind, should appear with greater and more undeniable evidence than ever any other fact in the world.

Deist. We are now upon the particular fact of the magi, or wise men coming to Christ; have you any more to say as to that?

5. *Chr.* It has those same evidences that the truth of the Bible in general has, which are more than can be produced for any other book in the world. But now, as to this fact in particular, St. Matthew was the first who wrote the gospel, and it was in the same age when this fact was said to be done: and can you think it possible that such a fact as this could have passed without contradiction, and a public exposing of Christianity, then so desirable and so much endeavoured by the unbelieving Jews, their high priests, elders, &c. as the only means for their own preservation, if the fact had not been notorious

and fresh in the memory of all the people then at Jerusalem; viz. that these wise men came thither, and that Herod and the whole city were troubled at the news they brought of the birth of the King of the Jews; that Herod thereupon gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, that they might search out of the prophets, and know the place where Christ should be born; and then the slaughter of the infants in and about Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, which followed—I say, could such a fact as this have passed at that very time, if it had not been true? Could St. Matthew have hoped to have palmed this upon all the people, and upon those very same chief priests and scribes who he said were so far concerned in it? Would none of them have contradicted it, if it had been a forgery; especially when the detecting it would have strangled Christianity in its birth? Would not they have done it who suborned false witnesses against Christ, and gave large money to the soldiers to conceal (if possible) his resurrection? Would not they have done it, who persecuted Christianity with all spite and fury, and invented all imaginable false stories and calumnies against it? whereas here was one at hand, this of the magi, which if false could have been so easily detected by appealing to every man, woman, and child, I may say, in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and even in all Judæa, who no doubt had heard of the terrible massacre of so many infants, and the cause of it.

Deist. I can give no account why the writers against Christianity did not offer to contradict this fact of the star and the magi, which is put in the very front of this Gospel of St. Matthew; and there

it is called his (Christ's) star; *We have seen his star in the east*—as if God had created a new and extraordinary star on purpose, as the signal of Christ hung out in the heavens, to give the world notice of his birth: but did none of the heathen philosophers take notice of this star, or of this relation given of it by your St. Matthew?

6. *Chr.* Yes. For Chalcidius, in his Comment upon Plato's *Timæus*, speaking of the presages of stars mentioned by Plato, adds as a further proof; *Est quoque alia venerabilior et sanctior historia*—"There is likewise another more venerable and holy history"—by which I doubt not he means this of St. Matthew, for what he tells seems to be taken out of it; "That by the rising of a certain unusual star, not plagues and diseases, but the descent of the venerable God, for the salvation and benefit of mortals, was observed by the Chaldæans, who worshipped this God newly born by offering gifts unto him."

Deist. This makes those magi or wise men to have been Chaldæans, who I know were the most noted then in the world for the most curious learning, particularly in astronomy; and they were likewise east of Jerusalem, so that it might be well said they came from the east, and had seen his star in the east. But I cannot imagine how they should read the birth of a God in the face of a new star; and how that star should send them particularly to Jerusalem, though I may suppose it pointed them westward.

7. *Chr.* This will be easier to you, when you know that all over the east there was a tradition, or fixed opinion, that about that time a King of the

Jews would be born, who should rule the whole earth; and the appearance of this extraordinary star in the east was taken by them as a sign that he was then born. And whither should they go to look for the King of the Jews but to Jerusalem? and when they came thither, they inquired, saying, *Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.* This made Herod gather the priests and scribes together; and they by searching the prophets found that Bethlehem was the place. Whereupon the wise men went to Bethlehem: and to convince them that they were right, the star which they had seen in the east appeared to them again, and *went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was.* This made them *rejoice with such an exceeding great joy.*

Deist. This would go down in some measure with me, if you could make good your first *postulation* of such a current tradition or opinion in the east; but for this you have given no sort of proof. And all the rest which you have inferred from thence must come to the ground with it, if it be not supported. I confess it would seem as strange to me as the star to the wise men, if God had (we know not how, it is unaccountable to us) sent such a notion into the minds of men, and at that time only, of such a King to be born, and that he should be a Jew, (the then most contemptible people in the world, subdued and conquered by the Romans,) and that he was to be King of the Jews, and thence to become King of all the earth, and conquer his conquerors: the Romans would have looked with disdain upon such a notion or prophecy as this; it

would have made some stir among them, if they had heard of it, or given any credit to it.

8. *Chr.* You argue right; and I will shew you what stir it made among them, and I hope you will take their word, as well for this eastern tradition, as for the effects it had among themselves. Nay they wanted not the same tradition among themselves, and express prophecies of it in their sibyls, and otherwise; so that the same expectation of the Messiah was then current over all the earth, with the Gentiles as well as with the Jews.

Tacitus, in his History, l. V. c. 13. speaking of the great prodigies that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, says, that many understood these as the forerunners of that extraordinary Person whom the ancient books of the priests did foreteli should come about that time from Judæa, and obtain the universal dominion: his words are, *Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum litteris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur*; i. e. “Many were persuaded “that it was contained in the old writings of the “priests, that at that very time the East should “prevail, and the Jews should have the dominion.” And Suetonius, in the Life of Vespasian, c. 1. n. 4. says, *Percrebruerat oriente toto vetus et constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum potirentur*; i. e. “That it was an ancient and “constant opinion (or tradition) throughout the “whole east, that at that time those who came from “Judæa should obtain the dominion;” that is, that some Jew should be universal king. Therefore Cicero, who was a commonwealth’s man, in his second book of Divination, speaking of the books of the

sibyls, who likewise foretold this great King to come, says, *Cum antistitibus agamus, et quidvis potius ex illis libris, quam regem proferant: quem Romæ post hæc nec dii nec homines esse patientur*; i. e. “Let us deal with these priests, and let “them bring any thing out of these books, rather “than a king; whom neither the gods nor men will “suffer after this at Rome.”

But he was mistaken, and had his head cut off for writing against kingly government. And others, more considerable than he, laid greater stress upon these prophecies, even the whole senate of Rome, as I come to shew you.

Whether these sibyls gathered their prophecies out of the Old Testament is needless here to examine: I am now only upon that general expectation which was then in the world of this great and universal King to come about that time.

9. The same year that Pompey took Jerusalem one of these oracles of the sibyls made a great noise, which was, “that nature was about to bring forth a “King to the Romans:” which, as Suetonius relates in the Life of Augustus, c. 94. did so terrify the senate, that they made a decree to expose, that is, destroy, all the children born that year: *Senatum exterritum censuisse, ne quis illo anno genitus educaretur*; that none born that year should be brought up, but exposed, that is, left in some wood or desert place, to perish. But he tells how this dreadful sentence was prevented, *Eos qui gravidas uxores haberent, quod ad se quisque spem traheret, curasse ne senatusconsultum ad ærarium deferretur*, “That those senators whose wives were with child, because each “was in hopes of having this great King, took care

“ that the decree of the senate should not be put
“ into the *ærarium*, or treasury,” without which, by
their constitution, the decree could not be put in
execution. And Appian, Plutarch, Sallust, and Ci-
cero do all say, that it was this prophecy of the
sibyls which raised the ambition of Corn. Lentulus
at that time, hoping he should be this King of the
Romans. Virgil, a few years before the birth of
Christ, in his fourth Eclogue, quotes a prophecy of
one of these sibyls speaking of an extraordinary per-
son to be born about that time, who should introduce
a golden age into the world, and restore all things,
and blot out our sins——*si qua manent sceleris*
vestigia nostri——and calls him, *chara deûm so-*
boles, magnum Jovis incrementum, “ dear offspring
“ of the gods, and great son of Jove.” He describes
a new state of things, like *the new heavens and the*
new earth, Isai. lxv. 17. *Magnus ab integro seculo-*
rum nascitur ordo; “ A great order of ages does
“ begin, wholly new.” And as Isaiah describes the
happy state in the new earth, that *the lion and the*
lamb should feed together, the serpent eat dust,
and that they should not hurt or destroy in all the
holy mountain, Isai. lxv. 25, Virgil does almost re-
peat his words:

——*Nec magnos metuent armenta leones:*
Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni
Occidet——

And as God introduces the Messiah, with saying,
I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the
sea, Hag. ii. 7, Virgil does in a manner translate it
in this Eclogue, introducing the great Person then
to be born, and the joy which should be in the
whole creation.

*Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,
Terrasque, tractusque maris, cælumque profundum:
Aspice, venturo lætentur ut omnia sæclo.*

Lo! teeming nature bending with its load,
The earth, the ocean, and the heavens high:
Behold, how all rejoice to greet the coming age!

Here the poet describes nature as in labour to bring forth this great King, as the other prophecy of the sibyls before mentioned speaks. And he says, *aderit jam tempus*, that “the time was then at hand.” *Jam nova progenies cælo demittitur alto*; “Now a new progeny from heaven descends.”

And he applies it to Saloninus, the son of Pollio the consul, then newly born, as if it was to be fulfilled in him. But as there was nothing like it in the event; so these words are too great to be applied to any mortal, or the reign of any king ever was in the world, or to any other but to the Messiah, the Lord of heaven and earth.

10. *Deist.* But you know the authority of these sibyls is disputed: some say the Christians did interpolate them, and added to them in about a hundred years after Christ.

Chr. It is true, the Christians did often quote them against the heathen, as St. Paul quoted the heathen poets to the Athenians, Acts xvii. 28; and Clem. Alexandrinus, in his Strom. l. VI, says, that St. Paul quoted the sibyls likewise in his disputations with the Gentiles; and the Christians were called sibyllianists from their quoting the sibyls so often; but Origen, in his answer to Celsus, l. VII. challenges him to shew any interpolation made by the Christians, and appeals to the heathen copies

which were in their own possession, and kept with great care.

But what I have quoted to you out of Virgil was before Christ was born, and therefore clear of all these objections.

Deist. Then the Jews must have had some hand in them; as likewise in that eastern tradition you have spoke of.

Chr. If so, you must suppose that the Jews had it from their own prophets: and this will be a strong confirmation that the time of the Messiah's coming was plainly told in the prophets.

11. *Deist.* What say the Jews to this? for I cannot imagine how they can get off of it.

Chr. Some of them say, that the Messiah put off his coming at the appointed time, because of their sins; others say, he did come at the time, but has concealed himself ever since.

Deist. These are mere excuses. Do they pretend any prophecy for this? but to what purpose? For these excuses shew that prophecies are no proofs, because if they may be thus put off, they can never be known; and they may be put off and put off to the end of the world.

12. *Chr.* But now, sir, as to your point. If this general expectation, both in east and west, of the great King of the Jews to be born about that very time that he did come was occasioned by the Jewish tradition of it, it strengthens the truth of the holy scriptures, whence the Jews had it: but otherwise, if God, we know not how, did send such a notion into the minds of men all over the world, at that particular time, and never the like, either before or since, then the miracle will be greater, and

the attestation to the coming of Christ stronger; and, as you said, it will be more wonderful and more convincing to you, than the star was to the wise men in the east.

Deist. I must take time to answer this. I made nothing at all of this of the magi and the star, and of Herod's slaying the infants upon it: I thought it a ridiculous story, and to have no foundation in the world. But when I see Suetonius telling us of the decree of the senate of Rome to destroy all the children born that year, and for the same reason, for fear of this great King that was then to be born; I must think there was a strange chining in of things here, one to answer the other; I know not how it happened, by chance, or how.

13. *Chr.* You cannot imagine there could be any concert in this matter; that the Chaldæans and Romans and Jews should all agree upon the point, and hit it so exactly, without any one of them discovering the contrivance; especially when it was so terrible to both the Romans and the Jews, that they took such desperate methods to prevent it, as to destroy their own children.

Deist. It is ridiculous to talk of a concert: I will not put my cause upon that. Would they concert what they thought their own destruction? Besides, the Jews and Romans were then enemies; and the Chaldæans were far off, and had little correspondence with either of them. And such an universal notion could not be concerted; whole nations could not be trusted with a secret: and if they all kept it, and against their own interest too, it would be as great a miracle as any in your Bible.

14. *Chr.* How much more impossible is it to

suppose that there should be a concert between different ages, between all the ages from Adam downwards, in all those prophecies of the coming of the Messiah? How should they know it but by revelation? And would they have all agreed so exactly as to the time, place, manner, and other circumstances, if it had been a forgery contrived by different persons and in different ages?

15. This is an argument which St. Peter thought stronger than the conviction even of our outward senses; for having set down what he and the other two apostles had both seen and heard upon the holy mount, he adds, *We have yet a more sure word* (that is, a stronger proof) *of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.* And he enforces it thus: *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* ^{2 Pet. i. 19, 21.}

Deist. I will grant his argument so far, that it is easier to suppose the senses of three men, or of all the men in the world, to be imposed upon, than that Adam, Abraham, and I had concerted together; but I will not give you my answer yet. Have you any more to say upon this head of prophecy?

Chr. I need say no more till your answer comes; for you have granted that this proof is stronger than what we see with our eyes.

16. But that your answer may take in all together, I will give you something further. I have set down already some of the great prophecies of the coming of Christ, his sufferings, death, and resurrection; but there are others which reach to seve-

ral minute circumstances, such as cannot be applied to any other fact that ever yet happened, and which could not have been foreseen by any but God ; nor were known by the actors who did them, else they had not done them : for they would not have fulfilled the prophecies that went before of Christ, in applying them to him whom they crucified as a false Christ.

See then how literally several of these prophecies were fulfilled ; as Psal. lxix. 21. *They gave me gall to eat, and vinegar to drink* : then read Matt. xxvii. 34. *They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall*. It is said, Psal. xxii. 16—18. *They pierced my hands and my feet—They stand staring and looking upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture* ; as if it had been wrote after John xix. 23, 24. It was merely accidental in the soldiers ; they would not tear his coat, because it was woven and without seam, therefore they cast lots for it : thus fulfilling this scripture without any knowledge of theirs, for they were Roman soldiers, and knew nothing of the scripture. Again it is said, Psal. xxii. 7, 8. *All they that see me laugh me to scorn : they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in God that he would deliver him : let him deliver him if he will have him*. Compare this with Matt. xxvii. 39, 41, 42, 43. *And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying—Come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests, mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said—He trusted in God ; let him deliver him now, if he will have him : for he said, I am the Son of God*. It is said again, Zech. xii. 10. *They shall look upon me whom*

they have pierced. His very price was foretold, and how the money should be disposed of, Zech. xi. 13. fulfilled, Matt. xxvii. 6, 7. And his riding into Jerusalem upon an ass, Zech. ix. 9. which the learned Rabbi Saadia expounds of the Messiah: that he should suffer with malefactors, Isa. liii. 12. that his body should not lie so long in the grave as *to see corruption*, Psal. xvi. 10.

Many other circumstances are told which cannot be applied to any but to Christ: I have set down these few, that you may take them into consideration when you think fit to give your answer as to this head of prophecies.

And you are to take care to find some other fact guarded with prophecies like this; or else you must confess that there is no other fact that has such evidence as this.

17. But before I leave this head, I must mention the prophecies in our Bible of things yet to come, to the end of the world, and of the new heavens and new earth that shall succeed.

Deist. These can be no proofs here, because we cannot see the fulfilling of them.

Chr. You may believe what is to come by the fulfilling you have seen of what is past. But I bring this now to shew you, that there is no other law or history in the world that so much as pretends to this, or to know what is to come; this is peculiar to the holy Bible, as being written from the mouth of God.

You have seen how the current of the prophecies of the Old Testament did point at and centre in that great event, the coming of the Messiah.

When he was come, then he told us more plainly of what was to come after him, even to the con-

summation of all things : and by what we have seen exactly fulfilled of all he told us to this time we must believe what remains yet to come.

18. How particularly did he foretell the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, Matt. xxiv. and that that age should not pass till it should be fulfilled ! And his very expression was literally fulfilled, that there should not be left one *stone upon another* in the temple, for the very foundations of it were ploughed up by Turnus Rufus. See Scaliger's Canon Isagog. p. 304.

When Jerusalem was first besieged it was full of Christians ; but the siege was raised unaccountably, and for no reason that history gives : in which time, the Christians seeing those signs come to pass which Christ had foretold would precede its destruction, and particularly laying hold of that caution he gave, *Then let them that are in Judæa flee to the mountains*, and that in such haste, as that he that was in the field was not to return (to Jerusalem) to fetch his garment, or he on the housetop there to stay to take his goods with him ; accordingly all the Christians left Jerusalem and fled to Pella, a city in the mountains : and as soon as they were all gone, the Romans returned, and renewed the siege. And so it came to pass, that when Titus sacked the city, there was not one Christian found there, and the destruction fell only upon the unbelieving Jews : the others escaped, as Lot out of Sodom, by believing the prediction of that ruin.

19. Another very remarkable prediction of our blessed Lord, in that same chapter, was of the many *false Christs* that should come after him. And he warned the Jews not to follow them, for that it

would be to their destruction: *Behold*, says he, ver. 25. *I have told you before*. But they would not believe him; and accordingly it came to pass. Josephus, in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, l. XVIII. c. 12. l. XX. c. 6. and *de Bell. Jud.* l. VII. c. 31. tells of abundance of these false Messiahs who appeared before the destruction of Jerusalem, and led the people into the wilderness, where they were miserably destroyed: the very thing of which our Saviour cautioned them, ver. 26. *If they say unto you, Behold, he (that is, Christ) is in the desert, go not forth*. And, *de Bell. Jud.* l. VII. c. 12, Josephus says, that the chief cause of their obstinacy in that war with the Romans was their expectation of a Messiah to come and deliver them, which brought on their ruin, and made them deaf to the offers of Titus, who courted them to peace.

And since the destruction of Jerusalem there have been so many false Messiahs, that Johannes à Lent has wrote a history of them, printed Herbonæ, 1697, which brings them down as far as the year 1682, and tells the lamentable destruction of the Jews in following them.

20. But the next prophecy of our blessed Lord which I produce is more remarkable than these; and of which you see the fulfilling in a great measure; viz. that his *gospel should prevail over all the world*, and that the *gates of hell should not prevail against it*; and this was told when he was low and despised, and had but twelve poor fishermen for his followers: and that his religion should conquer, not by the sword, like Mahomet's, but by patient suffering, as *lambs among wolves*. And in this state the church endured most terrible persecutions, when

all the rage of hell was let loose against her for the first three hundred years, without any help but from Heaven only; till at last, by the Divine providence, the great emperor of Rome and other mighty kings and princes, without any force or compulsion, did voluntarily and freely submit their sceptres to Christ.

No religion that ever was in the world was so begun, so propagated, and did so prevail: and hence we assuredly trust that what remains will be fulfilled of the promise of Christ to his church in the latter days.

But I speak now only of this prophecy so long beforehand, and when there was so little appearance of its coming to pass, so far as we have seen already.

Let me here remember one particular passage foretold by Christ concerning the woman who *anointed his body to the burying*, that *wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her*. And we see how it is spoken of to this day.

Mark xiv.
8, 9.

Deist. If this book had been lost, we had not heard of this prophecy.

Chr. So you may say of all the Bible, or of any other book: but Providence has fulfilled this prophecy by preserving the book. And it is a prophecy that this book, at least this fact of the woman, should be preserved for ever, and it may be preserved though that book were lost.

21. *Deist*. When prophecies are fulfilled, and the events come to pass, they are plain to every body; but why might they not have been as plain from

the beginning? and then there could have been no dispute about them, as if it had been said, that such a one by name, at such a time, and in such a place, should do such things, &c.

Chr. Because God having given man free-will, he does not force men to do any wicked thing. And it would be in the power of wicked men to defeat a prophecy against themselves, as to the circumstance of time, place, or the manner of doing the thing.

For example, if the Jews had known that Christ had told his apostles he was to be crucified, they would not have done it. They would have stoned him, as they did St. Stephen; for that was the death appointed by the law for blasphemy. And they several times attempted to have stoned Christ for this, because he said, *I am the Son of God*, John viii. 59. x. 31, 32, 33; but crucifixion was a death by the Roman law. Therefore the Jews, to fulfil this prophecy, (but not knowing it,) delivered Christ to the Romans to be put to death. Yet he told them so much of it, that after he was crucified they might know it, as he said to them, John viii. 28. *When ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he.* And chap. xii. 32, 33. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.* But they understood it not till they had done it: then they knew what the lifting up meant. And, chap. xviii. 31, 32, when Pilate would have had them judge him according to their law, which was stoning, they were cautious at this time only, and said, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death;* because they were then under the government of the Romans. But the next words shew the design

of providence in it, *that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.* They had no such caution upon them when they stoned St. Stephen after this, nor the many times before, when they took up stones to have stoned the same Jesus.

Then again, the piercing his side with the spear was no part of the Roman sentence of execution, but happened seemingly by mere accident. For the sentence of the law was, to hang upon the cross till they were dead: but that being the day of preparation for the sabbath, which began that evening soon after Christ and the thieves were fastened to the cross, before it could be supposed they were dead; therefore, *that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day,* the Jews besought Pilate that their legs might be broken (which was no part of the sentence neither, but done) lest they should escape when taken down. Accordingly the legs of the thieves were broken, for they were yet alive, and the reason why they brake not the legs of Christ was, because *they saw that he was dead already.* But to make sure, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear; little knowing that they were then fulfilling prophecies, as that *a bone of him should not be broken:* and again, *They shall look on him whom they pierced.* As little did the soldiers think of it when they were casting lots upon his vesture. And the chief priests (if they had known it or reflected upon it) would not have upbraided him in the very words that were foretold in the twenty-second Psalm, which I have before quoted. And they would have contrived the money they gave to Judas to have been one piece more or

less than just thirty. They would not have come so punctually in the way of that prophecy, Zech. xi. 12, 13. *They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.* And they would not have bought any field with it, but especially not that of the potter, which Zechariah there likewise mentions.

And as the enemies of Christ did not know they were fulfilling these prophecies of him, so neither did his disciples at the time when they were so doing. As it is said, John xii. 16, *These things understood not his disciples at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.* This makes the fulfilling these prophecies yet more remarkable.

Where Providence sees that prophecies will not be minded, they are more express and plain; as likewise where the passions and interests of men will hurry them on towards fulfilling them. Thus Alexander the Great is described as plainly almost as if he had been named, Dan. viii. 20, 21, 22; and it is said that this prophecy, which was shewed him by the high priest at Jerusalem, did encourage him in his expedition against the Persians. But it is not so when a man is to do foolish and wicked things, and things hurtful to himself; for if these were told plainly and literally, it would be in his power to do otherwise, unless God should force his will; and then he would not be a free agent.

22. *Deist.* I must have recourse to the Jews in answer to these prophecies of the Messiah which you have brought: for they, owning these scriptures as revelations given them by God, must have some

solution or other for them, or else give themselves up as self-condemned.

Chr. The answers the Jews give will convince you the more, and render them indeed self-condemned.

Before the coming of Christ the Jews understood these texts as we do, to be certainly meant of the Messiah, and of none other.

But since that time they have forced themselves to put the most strained and contradictory meanings upon them; for they agree not in their expositions, and the one does manifestly destroy the other.

Thus that text I before quoted, Gen. xlix. 10, was understood by the Chaldee and ancient Jewish interpreters to be meant of the Messiah.

Yet of their modern rabbies some say that it was meant of Moses. But others reject that, first, because it is plain that the gathering of the nations or Gentiles was not to Moses; secondly, because the sceptre was not given to Judah till long after Moses. The first of it that appears was, Judg. xx. 18, when Judah was commanded by God to *go up first*, and lead the rest of the tribes; and David was the first king of the tribe of Judah: thirdly, because Moses did prophesy of a greater than himself to come, to whom the people should hearken, Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19.

For these reasons, other rabbies say it could not be meant of Moses, but they apply it to the tabernacle at Shiloh. This was only for the sake of the word Shiloh; for otherwise it bears no resemblance either to the gathering of the Gentiles, or the sceptre of Judah. And though the house of God was first set up at Shiloh, yet it was removed from thence

and established at Jerusalem; which was the place of which Moses spoke, that God would place his name there, as I shall shew you presently.

This interpretation therefore being rejected, other rabbies say that this prophecy must be meant of the Messiah, but that by the word *sceptre* is not to be understood a sceptre of rule or government, but of correction and punishment, and that this should *not depart from Judah till Shiloh came*. But the text explaining *sceptre* by the word *lawgiver*, that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came*, overthrows this interpretation, and shews the sceptre here mentioned to be meant of a sceptre of rule and government. Again; Joshua gave them rest from their enemies round about; and the land had rest many years under their judges: and David delivered them out of the hands of their enemies; and under Solomon they were the richest and happiest people upon earth; and frequently after, they were in good condition and at ease: so that the sceptre of correction did often depart from them before Shiloh came.

This is so evident, that others of them allow this sceptre to be a sceptre of government, but they say the meaning is, that the sceptre shall not finally, or for ever, depart from Judah, because the Messiah will come and restore it to Judah again. But this is adding to the text, and making a new text of it, and quite different from the former, nay directly opposite to it: for the text speaks only of the departing of the sceptre, but nothing of the restoring it; and it cannot be restored till once it is departed: therefore this exposition, saying it *shall depart*, and

the text, saying it *shall not depart*, are directly contrary.

Lastly, there are others who throw aside all these excuses, and say, that the sceptre or dominion is not yet departed from Judah; for that some Jew or other may have some sort of rule or government in some part or other of the world, though we know it not.

Deist. As if the Jews (who hold the best correspondence with one another of any people) could not tell this place, if there were any such, where they were governed by their own laws, and by governors of their own nation, though in subjection to the government of the country where they lived.

These salvoes of the Jews are contradictory to each other; they are poor excuses, and shew their cause to be perfectly destitute.

But I have an objection against this prophecy, which affects both Jews and Christians; that the regal sceptre did depart from the tribe of Judah long before your Shiloh came.

Chr. First, this prophecy does not call the sceptre a regal sceptre, and therefore denotes only government in the general.

Secondly, the whole land and the nation took their name from Judah: it was called the land of Judah, and the nation took the name of Jews from Judah, as before that of Hebrews from Heber their progenitor, Gen. x. 25. And this prophecy spoke of those times when Judah should be the father of his country, and the whole nation should be comprehended under the name of Judah; and therefore Judah holds the sceptre wherever a Jew governs. Besides, the word *sceptre* and *throne* are used in

relation to inferior governors, to tributary kings, and kings in captivity; thus it is said, that thirty-seven years after the captivity of Judah *the king of Babylon set the throne of Jehoiachin king of Judah above the thrones of the kings that were with him in Babylon*, 2 Kings xxv. 27, 28. This was more than half the time of the captivity; and this was continued to Jehoiachin *all the days of his life*, ver. 29, 30, which might last till the end, or near the end, of the captivity. But besides the king, the Jews had governors of their own nation allowed them, who were their archontes, or rulers; and they enjoyed their own laws, though in subjection to the king of Babylon. The elders of Judah (which was a name of government) are mentioned in the captivity, Ezek. viii. 1; and *the chief of the fathers of Judah, and the priests and the Levites*, Ezra i. 5. And after the captivity they had a Tirshatha, or governor of their own nation, Ezra ii. 63. Neh. viii. 9; and the throne of the governor is named, Neh. iii. 7; so that here was still the throne or sceptre of Judah.

And from the time of the Maccabees to their conquest by the Romans, the supreme authority was in their high priests; as it was afterwards, but in subjection to the Romans; and they enjoyed their own laws: *Pilate said unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.* And though they answered, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death*, the reason is given in the next verse, *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which he spake, signifying what death he should die.* For crucifixion was a Roman death, but stoning, by the law of Moses, was the death for blasphemy, of which

John xviii.
3^r.

they accused him: and they afterwards stoned St. Stephen for the same (alleged) crime, *according to their own law*. Their high priests and council had full liberty to meet when they pleased, and to act according to their law: and Christ himself owns they *sat in Moses' seat*. The high priest sat to judge St. Paul, who applied to him that text, *Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people, or speak evil of him*, as the apostle renders it: so that here the government was still in the Jews, though in subjection to the Romans. And thus it continued till the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans: but since that time they are dispersed in all countries, and have no governor or ruler of their own in any; the sceptre is entirely departed from them.

Deist. It is impossible but the Jews must see the difference of their state before the destruction of Jerusalem and since, and of their condition as to government in their several captivities, and now in their dispersion. In the former they had still a face of government left among themselves, but now none at all; and their excuses which you have mentioned render them indeed self-condemned.

What do they say to that text you have quoted, Jer. xxxiii. 17, &c. that David should *never want a son to sit upon his throne*, &c. You Christians apply it to Christ, who was called the Son of David; but to whom do the Jews apply it?

Chr. Some of them say, that David will be raised from the dead, and made immortal, to fulfil this prophecy; others say, that after the Messiah, who is to be of the seed of David, he shall thenceforward no more want a son, &c.

Matt. xxiii.

2.

Exod. xxii.

28.

Acts xxiii.

5.

Deist. Both these interpretations are in flat contradiction to the text: the text says, *shall never want*; these say, shall want for a long time. They must confess now for near seventeen hundred years together, and how much longer they cannot tell, they have had none to sit in Moses' seat, or on the throne of David, though in subjection to their enemies, as they had in the worst of their captivities; but have not now in their dispersion.

But is there any difference betwixt what you call the *cathedra*, or seat of Moses, and the throne of David?

Chr. None as to government; for Moses was king in Jeshurun, Deut. xxxiii. 5. But David was the first king of the tribe of Judah, which was to be the name of the whole nation. And Christ was called the King of the Jews; it was the title set upon his cross: but after him none ever had that title to this day.

Deist. This is not to be answered by the Jews. But pray what person is it, do they say, was meant in the fifty-third of Isaiah, which you have quoted?

Chr. They will not have it to be any person at all; for they can find none, except our Christ, to whom these prophecies can any way be applied: therefore they say it must be meant of the nation of the Jews, whose sufferings, &c. are there described in the name of a person, by which the people are to be understood.

Deist. But the people and the person there described as suffering, &c. are plainly contradistinguished. It is said, ver. 8. *for the transgression of my people was he stricken.* And, ver. 3, 4, &c. *we* (the people) *esteemed him not.* *All we* (the people)

like sheep have gone astray—and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all, that is, of the people, who are here called *wicked*. But he is called *my righteous servant*, who *did no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth*. Therefore this people and the person here spoke of could not be the same: they are opposed to each other; the one called *righteous*, the other *wicked*: the one to die for the other, and to justify the other; *by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many*, &c.

Chr. The Jews before Christ came understood this prophecy of the Messiah, as indeed it can be applied to none other; but the Jews since Christ, to avoid the force of this and other prophecies which speak of the sufferings and death of the Messiah, have invented two Messiahs; one, Ben Joseph of the tribe of Ephraim, who is to be the suffering Messiah; the other, Ben David of the tribe of Judah, who is to triumph gloriously, and shall raise from the dead all the Israelites, and among them the first Messiah, Ben Joseph.

Deist. Does the scripture speak of two Messiahs, and the one raising the other?

Chr. No, not a word; but only of the Messiah; which shews it spoke only of one. But it mentions the twofold state of this Messiah, the first suffering, the second triumphing; whence the modern Jews have framed to themselves these two Messiahs.

Deist. This is shameful! and plainly to avoid the prophecies against them.

Chr. This of Isaiah is fully explained, Dan. ix. 24, &c. where it is said, that *the Messiah the Prince should be cut off, but not for himself*, but for the transgressions of the people, *to make an end of sins*,

and to make reconciliation for iniquity: and that this was to be within four hundred and ninety years after the building of the second temple, which I have mentioned before.

Deist. I cannot imagine how the Jews get clear of this.

Chr. They cannot; but in spite to it they seek now to undervalue the whole book of Daniel, though they dare not totally reject it, because it was received by their forefathers who preceded Christ. But about a hundred years after Christ they made a new distribution of the books of the Old Testament, different from their fathers, and took the book of Daniel out of the middle of the prophets, where it was placed before, and put it last of all. But more than this, to lessen the credit of this book, they adventured to shake the authority of their whole scriptures; for they took upon them to make a distinction of the books of the scripture, and made them not all inspired or canonical, but some of them they called *ἁγία γράφα*, that is, holy or pious books, though in a lower class than those called inspired or canonical scriptures; and they put the book of Daniel into the inferior class. But in that book Daniel speaks of himself as having received these prophecies immediately from an angel of God: wherein if he told us the truth, it must be put in the highest class of canonical scripture: but if he told us false, then this book is quite through all a lie, and blasphemous too, in fathering it all upon God. So that the distinction of our modern Jews confounds themselves. And since they allow this book of Daniel a place among the *ἁγία γράφα*, or holy writings, they cannot deny it to be truly canonical, as all their fa-

Ezek. xiv.
14, 20.
xxviii. 3.

thers owned it before the coming of Christ: and if they throw off Daniel, they must discard Ezekiel too: for he gives the highest attestation to Daniel that can be given to mortal man; he makes him one of the three most righteous men to be found in all ages, and the very standard of wisdom to the world.

Deist. What do they say to Hag. ii. 7, 9, where it is said that Christ was to come into the second temple?

Chr. Some of them say that this must be meant of a temple yet to be built.

Deist. This is denying the prophecy: for it is said, ver. 7, *I will fill this house with glory, &c.*; and, ver. 9, *The glory of this latter house—and in this place will I give peace, &c.* But I am not to defend the cause of the Jews; it seems to me very desperate: I own you Christians have the advantage of them in this.

Chr. And I hope it will have so much effect with you, as to make you consider seriously of the weight of this argument of prophecy we have discoursed.

Deist. Let us at present leave this head of prophecy. Have you any further evidence to produce for your Christ?

VII. *Chr.* I have one more, which is yet more peculiar to him than even that of prophecy. For whatever weak pretence may be made of some prophecies among the heathen, as to some particular events, of little consequence to the world, yet they never offered at that sort of evidence I am next to produce; which is, not only prophecies of the fact, and that from the beginning of the world, but also types, resemblances, and exhibitions of the fact, in

outward sensible institutions, ordained as laws from the beginning, and to continue till the fact they pre-figured should come to pass.

1. Such were the sacrifices instituted by God immediately upon the fall, (and upon his promise of the life-giving seed, Gen. iii. 15.) as types of that great and only propitiatory sacrifice for sin which was to come; whose blood they saw continually shed (in type) in their daily sacrifices.

These were continued in the heathen posterities of Adam by immemorial tradition from the beginning. Though they had forgot the beginning of them, as they had of the world or of mankind; yet they retained so much of the reason of them, as that they had universally the notion of a vicarious atonement, and that our sins were to be purged by the blood of others suffering in our stead; as likewise that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, but that a more noble blood was necessary. Hence they came to human sacrifices; and at last to sacrifice the greatest, most noble, and most virtuous; and such offered themselves to be sacrificed for the safety of the people: as Codrus king of the Athenians, who sacrificed himself on this account: the like did Curtius for the Romans, as supposing himself the bravest and most valuable of them all: so the Decii, the Fabii, &c. Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia for the Greek army: and the king of Moab sacrificed his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead. Thus the sacrificing (not their servants or slaves, but) their children to Moloch is frequently mentioned of the Jews, which they did in imitation of the heathen, as it is said, *They were mingled among the heathen*, Psal. cvi. *and learned their works. And they served their* 2 Kings iii. 27. 35—38.

Mich. vi.
6, 7.

idols——Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto the idols of Canaan, &c. Pursuant to which notion, the prophet introduceth them arguing thus; *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?* They were plainly searching after a complete and adequate satisfaction for sin: and they thought it necessary.

Deist. No doubt they thought so; but that did not make it necessary.

Chr. The doctrine of satisfaction is a subject by itself, which I have treated elsewhere, in my Answer to the Examination of my Last Dialogue against the Socinians. But I am not come so far with you yet, I am now only speaking of sacrifices as types of the sacrifice of Christ.

2. And besides sacrifices in general, there were afterwards some particular sacrifices appointed more nearly expressive of our redemption by Christ: as the passover, which was instituted in memory of the redemption of the children of Israel (that is, the church) out of Egypt, (the house of bondage of this world, where we are in servitude to sin and misery,) in the night when God slew all the firstborn of the Egyptians: but the destroyer was to pass over those houses where he saw the blood of the paschal lamb upon the doorposts: and it was to be eaten with unleavened bread, expressing the sincerity of the heart, without any mixture or taint of wickedness; and thus it is applied, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as*

ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

3. There was a double exhibition of Christ on the great day of expiation, which was but once a year. On which day only the high priest entered into the holy of holies, (which represented heaven, Exod. xxv. 40. Wisd. ix. 8. Heb. ix. 24.) with the blood of the sacrifice, whose body was burnt without the camp; to shew God's detestation of sin, and that it was to be removed far from us, and that we must go out of the camp, that is, out of this world, bearing our reproach for sin, before we can be quite freed from it. See how exactly this was fulfilled in Christ, Heb. xiii. 11—14. *For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

The other lively representation of Christ's bearing our sins, and taking them away from us, which was made on the same day of expiation, was the scape-goat, Lev. xvi. 21, 22. *And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities, unto a land not inhabited: and he*

shall let go the goat in the wilderness. This is so plain that it needs no application.

4. Another express representation of Christ was the brasen serpent in the wilderness, by looking upon which the people were cured of the stings of the fiery serpents: so in looking upon Christ by faith, the sting of the old serpent the Devil is taken away. And the lifting up the serpent did represent Christ's being lifted up upon the cross. Christ himself makes the allusion, John iii. 14, *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

5. He was likewise represented by the manna. For he was the true bread that came down from heaven to nourish us unto eternal life, John vi. 31 to 36.

6. As also by the rock whence the waters flowed out, to give them drink in the wilderness: *And that rock was Christ*, 1 Cor. x. 4.

7. And he was not only their meat and drink, but he was also their constant guide, and led them in a pillar of fire by night and of a cloud by day. And the cloud of glory in the temple, in which God appeared, was by the Jews understood as a type of the Messiah, who is the true shechina, or habitation of God.

8. The sabbath is called a shadow of Christ, Col. ii. 17. It was a figure of that eternal rest procured to us by Christ. Therefore it is called a sign of the perpetual covenant, Exod. xxxi. 16, 17. Ezek. xx. 12.

9. And such a sign was the temple at Jerusalem; at which place, and none other, the sacrifices of the Jews were to be offered, Deut. xii. 11, 13, 14, because Christ was to be sacrificed there; and as a

token of it, those sacrifices which were types of him were to be offered only there.

And so great stress was laid upon this, that no sin of the Jews is oftener remembered than their breach of this command. It was a blot set upon their several reformatations, otherwise good and commendable in the sight of God, that the high places (where they used to sacrifice) were not taken away. This is marked as the great defect in the reformation of Asa, 1 Kings xv. 14; of Jehoshaphat, 1 Kings xxii. 43; of Jehoash, 2 Kings xii. 3; of Amaziah, 2 Kings xv. 4; of Jotham, ver. 35; but they were taken away by Hezekiah, 2 Kings xviii. 4, and the people instructed to sacrifice and burn incense at Jerusalem only, 2 Chron. xxxii. 12. Isai. xxxvi. 7.

There was likewise a further design of Providence in limiting their sacrifices to Jerusalem; which was, that after the great propitiatory sacrifice of Christ had been offered there, God was to remove the Jews from Jerusalem, that they might have no sacrifice at all (as, for that reason, they have not had in any part of the world near these seventeen hundred years past) to instruct them, that (as the apostle speaks to them, Heb. x. 26.) *there remaineth no more* (or other) *sacrifice for sins*. And since by the law their sins were to be purged by sacrifice, they have now no way to purge their sins; to force them, as it were, to look back upon that only sacrifice which can purge their sins. And till they return to that, they must have no sacrifice at all, but die in their sins. As Jesus said unto them, *I go my way, and ye shall die in your sins.—For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*, John viii. 21, 24.

And Daniel prophesied expressly, that soon after the death of the Messiah the city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary should be destroyed, and that the sacrifice should cease, *even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate*, Dan. ix. 26, 27.

And this desolation of theirs, and what was determined upon them, was told them likewise by Hosea, chap. iii. 4; *For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice*. But he says in the next verse, that in the latter days they shall *return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king*; that is, the Son of David, their Prince and Messiah; as he is called *Messiah the Prince*, Dan. ix. 25.

Thus as salvation was of the Jews, because Christ was to come of them, so this salvation was only to be had at Jerusalem, where he was to suffer, and by which only salvation was to be had.

10. *Deist*. This argument is to the Jews: and if I were a Jew it would move me, because they never were so long before without king, temple, or sacrifice.

Chr. But the prophecies of it, and these fulfilled as you have seen; and Christ being so plainly pointed at, and the place of his passion, by limiting the sacrifices to Jerusalem only; and by that causing the legal sacrifices to cease throughout the world, to shew that they were fulfilled: all this is a strong evidence to you of the truth of these things, and of our Jesus being the Messiah, or Christ, who was prophesied of.

Deist. I cannot deny but there is something remarkable in this, which I will take time to consider.

But I do not see how the Jews can stand out against this; because this mark given by Daniel of the Messiah, that soon after his death the sacrifice should cease, cannot agree to any after-Messiah who should now come so many ages after the sacrifice has ceased.

Chr. Since we have fallen into the subject of the Jews, I will give you another prophecy which cannot be fulfilled in any after-Messiah, whom the Jews expect. And it will be also a confirmation to you of the truth of the prophecies of the holy scriptures.

Thus God speaks, Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21, 22. *Thus saith the Lord; if you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.*

Now let the Jews tell in which son of David this is fulfilled, except only in our Christ:

And how this is made good to the priests and Levites, otherwise than as Isaiah prophesied, chap. lxvi. 21. *And I will also take of them* (the Gentiles) *for priests, and for Levites, saith the Lord;* and as it is thus applied, 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. and Rev. i. 6. And this evangelical priesthood is multiplied as the stars of heaven, (which they are frequently called,) not like the tribe of Levi, which could not afford priests to all the earth.

And as I said before of Jerusalem and the sacri-

fices there, that they are ceased, to shew they are fulfilled; so here, after this son of David was come, all his other sons ceased, and the very genealogy of their tribes, and so of Judah, is lost, as also of the tribe of Levi; so that the Jews can never tell, if any after-Messiah should appear, whether he were of the tribe of Judah, far less, whether he were of the lineage of David; nor can they shew the genealogy of any they call Levites now among them.

This is occasioned by their being dispersed among all nations, and yet preserved a distinct people from all the earth, though without any country of their own, or king, or priest, or temple, or sacrifice. And they are thus preserved by the providence of God, (so as never any nation was since the foundation of the world,) to shew the fulfilling of the prophecies concerning them, and the judgments pronounced against them for their crucifying their Messiah; and that their conversion may be more apparent to the world, and their being gathered out of all nations and restored to Jerusalem, (as is promised them,) when they shall come to acknowledge their Messiah.

And God not permitting them to have any king or governor upon earth, ever since their last dispersion by the Romans, (lest they might say that the sceptre was not departed from Judah,) is to convince them (when God shall take the veil off their heart) that no other Messiah who can come hereafter can answer this prophecy of Jeremiah, or that of Jacob, that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah till Shiloh came.*

11. And it is wonderful to consider how expressly their present state is prophesied of, that it could not

be more literal, if it were to be worded now by us who see it. As, that they should be scattered into all countries, sifted as with a sieve among all nations, yet preserved a people; and that God would make an utter end of those nations who had oppressed them, and blot out their names from under heaven, (as we have seen it fulfilled upon the great empires of the Assyrians, Chaldæans, and Romans, who one after the other had miserably wasted the Jews,) but that the name of the Jews (the fewest and the poorest of all nations) should remain for ever, and they a people distinct from all the nations in the world, though scattered among them all. Read the prophecies express upon this point, Jer. xxx. 11. xxxi. 36, 37. xxxiii. 24, 25, 26. xlvi. 28. Isai. xxvii. 7. xxix. 7, 8. liv. 9, 10. lxv. 8. Ezek. vi. 8. xi. 16, 17. xii. 15, 16. Amos ix. 8, 9. Zech. x. 9. And it was foretold them long before, that thus it would be, Lev. xxvi. 44. and this *in the latter days*, Deut. iv. 27, 30, 31. Thus Moses told them of it so long before, as the after-prophets frequently; and you see all these prophecies literally fulfilled and fulfilling. The like cannot be said of any other nation ever was upon the earth, so destroyed and so preserved; and for so long a time: having worn out all the great empires of the world, and still surviving them; to fulfil what was further prophesied of them to the end of the world.

Deist. I cannot say but there is something very surprising in this: I never thought of it before; it is a living prophecy, which we see fulfilled and still fulfilling at this day before our eyes: for we are sure these prophecies were not coined yesterday. And they are as express and particular as if they

were to be wrote now, after the events are so far come to pass.

12. *Chr.* As the door was kept open to Christ before he came, by the many and flagrant prophecies of him, and by the types representing him; so was the door for ever shut after him, by those prophecies being all fulfilled and completed in him, and applicable to none who should come after him; and by all the types ceasing, the shadows vanishing when the substance was come. No Messiah can come now, before the sceptre depart from Judah, and the sacrifice from Jerusalem; before the sons of David (all except Christ) shall cease to sit upon his throne. None can come now, within four hundred and ninety years of the building of the second temple; nor come into that very temple, as I have before shewed was expressly prophesied by Daniel and Haggai.

Deist. I know not what the Jews can say, who own these prophecies.

Chr. They say, that the coming of the Messiah at the time spoke of in the prophets has been delayed because of their sins.

Deist. Then it may be delayed for ever, unless they can tell us when they will grow better. But, however, these prophecies have failed which spoke of the time of the Messiah's coming; and they can never be a proof hereafter, because the time is past. So that, according to this, they were made for no purpose; unless to shew that they were false, that is, no prophecies at all.

But were these prophecies upon condition? or was it said that the coming of the Messiah should be delayed, if the Jews were sinful?

Chr. No; so far from it, that it was expressly prophesied that the coming of the Messiah should be in the most sinful state of the Jews, and to purge ^{Dan. ix. 24.} their sins. And the ancient tradition of the Jews ^{Zech. xiii.} was pursuant to this, that at the coming of the ^{1.} Messiah the temple should be *a den of thieves*, Rabbi Juda in Masoreta, and a time of great corruption, Talmud. tit. *de Synedrio*, and *de Ponderibus*, &c.

But more than this, the very case is put of their being most sinful; and it is expressly said, that this should not hinder the fulfilling of the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah, spoke of as the Son of David, 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15, 16. Psal. lxxxix. 30, 33—37.

But it was prophesied that they should not know their Messiah, and should reject him when he came; that he should be *a stone of stumbling*, and *a rock* ^{Isa. viii. 14,} *of offence* to them; and that *their eyes should be* ^{15.} *closed*, that they should not understand their own ^{Chap. xxix.} prophets; that their *builders* should *reject the head* ^{9, 10, 11.} *stone of the corner*: and the like in several other ^{Psal. cxviii.} places of their own prophets. And thus they mis- ^{22.} took the prophecy concerning the coming of Elias, whom it is said they *knew not, but did to him what* ^{Matt. xvii.} *they listed*, and so the same of Christ. And it is ^{12.} said, that *had they known it they would not have* ^{1 Cor. ii. 8.} *crucified the Lord of glory*.

Deist. This indeed solves the prophecies, both those of the coming of the Messiah, and of the Jews not knowing him, and therefore rejecting him: and likewise obviates this excuse of theirs; for if they were very sinful at that time, it was a greater punishment of their sin not to know, and to reject

their Messiah, than his not coming at that time would have been.

Chr. The great sin mentioned, for which they were punished by several captivities, was their idolatry, the last and longest of which captivities was that of seventy years in Babylon: since which time they have forsaken their idolatry, and have never been nationally guilty of it since, but always had it in the utmost abhorrence. But since their rejecting their Messiah, they have been now near seventeen hundred years, not in a captivity, where they might be all together, and enjoying their own law, government, and worship, in some manner; but dispersed over all the world, without country of their own, or king, or priest, or temple, or sacrifice, or any prophet to comfort them, or give them hopes of a restoration: and all this come upon them, not for their old sin of idolatry, but from that curse they imprecated upon themselves when they crucified their Messiah, saying, *His blood be upon us, and on our children*: which cleaves unto them from that day to this, and is visible to all the world but to themselves. And what other sin can they think greater than idolatry, for which they have been punished so much more terribly than for all their idolatries? What other sin can this be, but their crucifying their Messiah? And here they may see their sinful state, which they allege as an excuse for their Messiah's not coming at the time foretold by the prophets, rendered tenfold more sinful by their rejecting him when he came.

Deist. This is a full answer, and convincing as to the Jews: but have you any more to say to me?

13. *Chr.* I have one thing more to offer, which

may come under this head of types, and that is, persons who represented Christ in several particulars, and so might be called personal types.

And I will not apply these out of my own head, but as they are applied in the New Testament, which having all the marks of the Old Testament, and stronger evidence than these in those marks we are now upon, their authority is indisputable.

1. I begin with Adam, who gave us life and death too: and Christ came by his death to restore us to life again, even life eternal. Hence Christ is called *the second Adam*, and Adam is called *the figure of Christ*: the parallel betwixt them is insisted on, Rom. v. 12. to the end, and 1 Cor. xv. 45—50. Eve received her life from Adam, as the church from Christ; she was taken out of the side of Adam when he was in a *dead sleep*; and after Christ was dead, the sacraments of water and blood flowed out of his side, that is, baptism, whereby we are born into Christ, and the sacrament of his blood, whereby we are nourished into eternal life.

2. Enoch was carried up bodily into heaven, as Elijah; one under the patriarchal, the other under the legal dispensation: in both, the ascension of Christ was prefigured.

3. Noah, a preacher of righteousness to the old world, and father of the new; who *saved* the church 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. *by water, the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us.*

4. *Melchisedec*, that is, *king of righteousness*, Heb. vii. 1, and *king of peace, and priest of the most high God*; ^{2, 3.} *who was made like unto the Son of God, a priest continually.*

5. Abraham, the *friend of God*, and *father of* Rom. iv. 13.

Gen. xviii. 18. *the faithful, the heir of the world: in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed.*

6. Isaac, the heir of this promise, was born after his father and mother were both past the age of generation in the course of nature, Gen. xvii. 17. xviii. 11. Rom. iv. 19. Heb. xi. 11, 12. The nearest type that could be to the generation of Christ wholly without a man.

And his sacrifice had a very near resemblance to the sacrifice and death of Christ, who lay three days in the grave; and Isaac was three days a dead man, (as we say in law,) under the sentence of death, Heb. xi. 19. whence *Abraham received him in a figure*, that is, of the resurrection of Christ. And Abraham was commanded to go three days' journey to sacrifice Isaac upon the same mountain (according to the ancients) where Christ was crucified, and where Adam was buried. Again, the common epithet of Christ, i. e. *the only-begotten of the Father*, and his *beloved Son*, were both given to Isaac, Gen. xxii. 2. Heb. xi. 17. For he was the only son that was begotten in that miraculous manner, after both his parents were decayed by nature: and he was the only son of the promise, which was not made to the seed of Abraham in general, but *in Isaac shall thy seed be called*. He saith not, *And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*

Gen. xxi.

12.

Gal. iii. 16.

And as Isaac, which signifies *rejoicing*, or *laughing for joy*, was thus the only-begotten of his parents, so Abram signifies the *glorious father*, and Abraham (into which his name was changed on the promise of Isaac, Gen. xvii. 5, 16.) signifies *the father of a multitude*, to express the coming in of the

Gentiles to Christ, and the increase of the gospel; whence it is there said to Abraham, *a father of many nations have I made thee: and in thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.*

Isaac, who was born by promise of a free woman, represented the Christian church, in opposition to Ishmael, who was born after the flesh of a bondmaid, and signified the Jewish church under the law. See this allegory carried on, Gal. iv. 21. to the end.

7. Jacob's vision of the ladder, (Gen. xxviii. 12.) shews the intercourse which was opened by Christ betwixt heaven and earth by his making peace; and to this he alludes when he says, *Here-^{John i. 51.} after you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*

And Jacob's wrestling with the angel, (Gen. xxxii. 24, &c. Hos. xii. 4.) and as it were prevailing over him by force to bless him, shews the strong and powerful intercession of Christ: whereby (as he words it) *heaven suffereth violence, and the violent^{Mat. xi. 12.} take it by force:* whence the name of Jacob was then turned to Israel, that is, one who prevails upon God, or has power over him; God representing himself here as overcome by us. And the name of Israel was ever after given to the church; but much more so when Christ came, as he said, *From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,* that is, from the first promulgation of Christ being come. Thenceforward the Gentiles began to press into the gospel, and as by force to take it from the Jews: this was signified in the name Jacob, that is, a supplanter;

for the Gentiles here supplanted their elder brother the Jews, and stole the blessing and heirship from them.

8. Joseph was sold by his brethren out of envy; but it proved the preservation of them and all their families: and Christ was sold by his brethren out of envy, which proved the means of their redemption: and Christ, as Joseph, became lord over his brethren.

Mark xv.
10.

9. Moses calls Christ a prophet like unto himself. He represented Christ the great lawgiver: and his delivering Israel out of Egypt was a type of Christ's delivering his church from the bondage of sin and hell.

Deut. xviii.
18.

10. Joshua, called also Jesus, overcame all the enemies of Israel, and gave them possession of the Holy Land, which was a type of heaven: and Christ appeared to Joshua, as captain of the host of the Lord; so that Joshua was his lieutenant representing him.

Heb. iv. 8.

Jos. v. 14.

11. Samson, who by his single valour and his own strength overcame the Philistines, and *slew more at his death than in all his life*, was a representation of Christ, who *trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with him, but his own arm brought him salvation*. But his death completed his victory, whereby he overcame all the power of the enemy, *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross*.

Isa. lxiii. 3,
5.

Col. ii. 15.

12. David, whose son Christ is called, speaks frequently of him in his own person, and in events which cannot be applied to David, as, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy holy one*

Psal. xvi.
10.

to see corruption: for David has seen corruption. Christ is said to *sit upon the throne of David*; and Isa. ix. 7. Christ is called by the name of *David*, Hos. iii. 5. and frequently in the prophets.

David from a shepherd became a king and a prophet, denoting the threefold office of Christ, pastoral, regal, and prophetic.

13. Solomon, the wisest of men, his peaceable and magnificent reign represented the triumphal state of Christ's kingdom, which is described, Psal. lxxii. (inscribed for Solomon, there called the *king's son*;) but far exceeding the glory of his reign, or what can possibly be applied to him, as ver. 5, 8, 11, 17. But his reign came the nearest of any to that universal and glorious reign there described, particularly in his being chosen to build the temple, because he was a man of peace, and had shed no blood like David his father, who conquered the enemies of Israel; but Solomon built the church in full peace; and as it is particularly set down, 1 Kings vi. 7. and no doubt he was ordered by God so to do, *that the house when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building*: which did denote that the church of Christ was to be built, not only in peace, but without noise or confusion, as Isaiah prophesied of him, chap. xlii. 2. *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, &c.* He was not to conquer with the sword, as the Israelites subdued Canaan, but to overcome by meekness, and doing good to his enemies, and patiently suffering all injuries from

them: and so he taught his followers, as St. Paul
 2 Tim. ii. 24. says, *The servant of the Lord must not strive; but
 be gentle unto all men—In meekness instructing
 those that oppose themselves.*

And I cannot think but there was some imitation
 of this peaceable temple of Solomon in the temple
 of Janus among the Romans; for that was never
 to be shut but in time of peace: which happened
 rarely among them, but three times in all their his-
 tory: the last was in the reign of Augustus, in
 which time Christ came into the world, when there
 was a profound and universal peace: and so it be-
 came the Prince of peace, whose birth was thus pro-
 Luke ii. 14. claimed by the angels, *Glory to God on high, and
 on earth peace, good-will towards men.* But to
 go on:

14. Jonah's being three days and nights in the
 belly of the whale, was a sign of Christ's being so
 long in the heart of the earth; Christ himself makes
 the allusion, Matt. xii. 40.

15. But as there were several persons at several
 times representing and prefiguring several particu-
 lars of the life and death of Christ, so there was
 one standing and continual representation of him
 appointed in the person of the high priest under the
 law; who entering into the holy of holies once in a
 year, with the blood of the great expiatory sacrifice,
 and he only, to make atonement for sin, did lively
 represent our great High Priest entering into hea-
 ven, once for all, with his own blood, to expiate the
 sins of the whole world: this is largely insisted upon
 in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. vii. viii. ix. x.

And our deliverance by the death of Christ is
 represented, as in a picture, in that ordinance of the

law, that the manslayer who fled to one of the cities of refuge (which were all of the cities of the Levites) should not come out thence till the death of the high priest, and no satisfaction be taken till then, and then he should be acquitted, and *return* Num. xxxv. 6, 25, 26, 27, 28.
into the land of his possession.

And I doubt not but the Gentiles had from hence their *asyla*, or temples of refuge for criminals.

(1.) *Deist.* There is a resemblance in these things; but I would not have admitted them as a proof, if you had not supported them, at least most of them, with the authority of the New Testament: and it was not necessary that every one should be named in it, for those that are named are only occasionally: and I must take time to consider of the evidences you have brought for the authority of the New Testament, which you have made full as great, if not greater, than the evidences for the Old Testament.

Chr. I may say greater upon this head of prophecies and types, because these are no proofs till they are fulfilled; though then they prove the truth of these prophecies and types, and so the one confirms the other: but the whole evidence of the law is not made apparent till we see it fulfilled in the gospel; for which reason I call the gospel the strongest proof, not only as to itself, but likewise as to the law: and the Jews, as much as in them lies, have invalidated this strongest proof for the Old Testament, which is the fulfilling of it in the New; nay, they have rendered these prophecies false, which they say were not fulfilled at the time they spake of, and never now can be fulfilled. And as no fact but that of our Christ alone ever had this evidence

of prophecies and types from the beginning, so never can any other fact have it now while the world lasts.

(2.) *Deist*. Why do you say, “never can have it?” for may not God make what fact he pleases, and give it what evidence he pleases?

Chr. But it cannot have the evidence that the fact of Christ has, unless at that distance of time hereafter as from the beginning of the world to this day: because God took care that the evidence of Christ should commence from the very beginning, in the promise of him made to Adam, and to be renewed by the prophets in all the after-ages till he should come: and the evidence of him after his coming, (in which I have instanced,) and which continues to this day, before it can belong to any other, must have the same compass of time that has gone to confirm this evidence, else it has not the same evidence.

(3.) *Deist*. By this argument, the evidence grows stronger the longer it continues, since you say that the prophecies of the scriptures reach to the end of the world; and so will be further and further fulfilling every day.

This is contrary to what one of your doctors^a has lately advanced, who pretends to calculate the age of evidences, that in such a time they decay, and in such a time must die. And that the evidence of Christianity, having lasted so long, is upon the decay, and must wear out soon, if not supplied by some fresh and new evidence.

Chr. This may be true as to fables which have

^a Craig. *Theologiæ Christianæ Principia Mathematica*, 1699.

no foundation. But is that prophecy I mentioned to you, of the dispersion and yet wonderful preservation of the Jews, less evident to you, because it was made so long ago?

Deist. No; it is much more evident for that. If I had lived at the time when those prophecies were made, I fancy I should not have believed one word of them; but wondered at the assurance of those who ventured to foretell such improbable and almost impossible things.

And I should have thought the same of what you have told me of your Christ foretelling the progress of his gospel, at the first so very slender appearance of it, and by such weak and improbable means, as only suffering and dying for it, which to me would have seemed perfect despair, and a giving up the cause.

I should have thought of them (as of others) who prophesy of things after their time, that they might not be contradicted while they lived.

But my seeing so much of these prophecies concerning the Jews, and the progress of the gospel, come to pass so long time after, is the only thing that makes me lay stress upon them, and which makes them seem wonderful to me.

Chr. When the prophecies shall all be fully completed at the end of the world, they will then seem strongest of all. They will then be undeniable, when Christ shall visibly descend from heaven (in the same manner as he ascended) to execute both what he has promised and threatened. And in the mean time, the prophecies lose none of their force, but their evidence increases, as *the light shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

VIII. *Deist.* I observe you have made no use of that common topic of the truth and sincerity of the penmen of the scriptures, and what interest they could have in setting up these things if they had been false; for this can amount at most but to a probability. And you having produced those evidences which you think infallible, it might seem a lessening of your proof to insist upon bare probabilities: so that I suppose you give that up.

1. *Chr.* No, sir, I give it not up, though I have not made it the chief foundation of my argument. And if it were but a probability, it wants not its force, for it is thought unreasonable to deny a flagrant probability, where there is not as strong a probability on the other side, for then that makes a doubt. But otherwise men generally are satisfied with probabilities, for that is the greatest part of our knowledge. If we will believe nothing but what carries an infallible demonstration along with it, we must be sceptics in most things in the world: and such were never thought the wisest men.

But besides, a probability may be sooner discerned by some than the infallibility of a demonstration; therefore we must not lay aside probabilities.

But in this case I think there is an infallible assurance, as infallible as the senses of all mankind; and I suppose you will not ask a greater.

2. *Deist.* How can you say that? when the suffering of afflictions, and death itself, is but a probability of the truth of what is told us; because some have suffered death for errors.

Chr. But then they thought them true; and men may be deceived in their judgments; we see many examples of it. But if the facts related be such, as

that it is impossible for those who tell them to be imposed upon themselves, or for those to whom they are told to believe them, if not true, without supposing an universal deception of the senses of mankind, then I hope I have brought the case up to that infallible demonstration I promised. And this is the case of the facts related in holy scripture. They were told by those who saw them and did them, and they were told to those who saw them likewise themselves; and the relaters appealed to this: so that here could be no deceit.

Deist. I grant there is a great difference betwixt errors in opinion and in fact. And that such facts as are told of Moses and of Christ could not have passed upon the people then alive, and who were said to have seen them. And I find that both Moses, Christ, and the apostles did appeal to what the people they spoke to had seen themselves.

Chr. With this consideration, their patient suffering, even unto death, for the truth of what they taught, will be a full demonstration of the truth of it.

3. Add to this, that their enemies who persecuted them, the Romans as well as Jews, to whom they appealed as witnesses of the facts, did not offer to deny them.

That none of the apostates from Christianity did attempt to detect any falsehood in the facts, though they might have had great rewards if they could have done it; the Roman emperors being then persecutors of Christianity, and for three hundred years after Christ: and Julian the emperor afterwards turned apostate, who had been initiated in the sacra of Christianity, yet could not he detect any of the facts.

4. And it was a particular providence for the further evidence of Christianity, that all the civil governments in the world were against it for the first three hundred years, lest it might be said (as it is ridiculously in your Amyntor) that the awe of the civil government might hinder those who could make the detection.

Now, sir, to apply all that we have said, I desire you would compare these evidences I have brought for Christianity with those that are pleaded for any other religion.

There are but four in the world; viz. Christianity, Judaism, heathenism, and Mahometism.

Christianity was the first. For from the first promise of Christ made to Adam, during the patriarchal and legal dispensations, all was Christianity in type, as I have shewed.

First then, as to Moses and the law; the Jews can give no evidence for that, which will not equally establish the truth of Christ and the gospel; nor can they disprove the facts of Christ by any topic, which will not likewise disprove all those of Moses and the prophets: so that they are hedged in on every side: they must either renounce Moses, or acknowledge Christ.

Moses and the law have the first five evidences, but they have not the sixth and the seventh, which are the strongest.

This is as to Judaism before Christ came: but since, as it now stands in opposition to Christianity, in favour of any future Messiah, it has none of the evidences at all. On the contrary, their own prophecies and types make against them; for their prophecies are fulfilled, and their types are ceased,

and cannot belong to any other Messiah who should come hereafter: they stand now more naked than the heathens or the Mahometans.

Secondly, next for heathenism, some of the facts recorded of their gods have the first and second evidences, and some the third, but not one of them the fourth, or any of the other evidences.

But truly and properly speaking, and if we will take the opinion of the heathens themselves, they were no facts at all, but mythological fables, invented to express some moral virtues or vices, or the history of nature and power of the elements, &c.; as likewise to turn great part of the history of the Old Testament into fable, and make it their own, for they disdained to borrow from the Jews. They made gods of men, and the most vicious too; insomuch that some of their wise men thought it a corruption of youth to read the history of their gods, whom they represented as notorious liars, thieves, adulterers, &c. though they had some mythology hid under all that.

And as men were their gods, so they made the first man to be father of the gods, and called him Saturn, not begot by any man, but the son of Cœlus and Vesta, that is, of heaven and earth. And his maiming his father with a steel scythe was to shew how heaven itself is impaired by time, whom they painted with wings and a scythe mowing down all things. And Saturn eating up his own children was only to express how time devours all its own productions; and his being deposed by Jupiter his son shews, that time, which wears away all other things, is worn away itself at last.

Several of the heathen authors have given us the

mythology of their gods, with which I will not detain you.

They expressed every thing, and worshipped every thing under the name of a god ; as the god of sleep, of music, of eloquence, of hunting, drinking, love, war, &c. ; they had above thirty thousand of them. And in what they told of them, and as they described them, they often traced the sacred story.

Ovid begins his *Metamorphoses* with a perfect poetical version of the beginning of *Genesis* : *Ante mare et terras*——then goes on with the history of the creation ; the formation of man out of the dust of the earth, and his being made after the image of God, and to have dominion over the inferior creatures. Then he tells of the general corruption, and the giants before the flood, when the earth was filled with violence ; for which all mankind, with the beasts and the fowl, were destroyed by the universal deluge, except only Deucalion and Pyrrha his wife, who were saved in a boat, which landed them on the top of mount Parnassus ; and that from these two the whole earth was repopled. I think it will be needless to detain the reader with an application of this to the history of the creation set down by Moses ; of the flood, and the ark wherein Noah was saved, and the earth repopled by him, &c.

And Noah was plainly intended likewise in their god Janus, with his two faces, one old, looking backward to the old world that was destroyed ; the other young, looking forward to the new world that was to spring from him.

So that even their turning the sacred history into fable is a confirmation of it. And there can be no

comparison betwixt the truth of the facts attested as I have shewed, and the fables that were made from them.

Thirdly, as to the Mahometan religion, it wants all the evidences we have mentioned; for there was no miracle said to be done by Mahomet publicly and in the face of the world, but that only of conquering with the sword. Who saw his mesra or journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to heaven in one night, and back in bed with his wife in the morning? Who was present, and heard the conversation the moon had with him in his cave? it is not said there was any witness. And the Alcoran, c. vi. excuses his not working any miracles to prove his mission. They say that Moses and Christ came to shew the clemency and goodness of God, to which miracles were necessary; but that Mahomet came to shew the power of God, to which no miracle was needful but that of the sword.

1. And his Alcoran is a rhapsody of stuff without head or tail, one would think wrote by a madman, with ridiculous titles, as the chapter of the Cow, of the Spider, &c.

And their legends are much more senseless than those of the papists, as of an angel, the distance betwixt whose two hands is seventy thousand days' journey: of a cow's head with horns, which have forty thousand knots, and forty days' journey betwixt each knot: and others which have seventy mouths, and every mouth seventy tongues, and every tongue praises God seventy times a day, in seventy different idioms: and of wax candles before the throne of God, which are fifty years' journey from one end to the other. The Alcoran says the earth

was created in two days, and is supported by an ox which stands under it, upon a white stone, with his head to the east and his tail to the west, having forty horns, and as great a distance betwixt every horn as a man could walk in a thousand years' time.

Then their description of heaven in a full enjoyment of wine, women, and other like gross, sensual pleasures.

2. When you compare this with our holy scriptures, you will need no argument to make you see the difference. The heathen orators have admired the sublime of the style of our scriptures. No writing in the world comes near it, even with all the disadvantage of our translation, which, being obliged to be literal, must lose much of the beauty of it. The plainness and succinctness of the historical part, the melody of the Psalms, the instruction of the Proverbs, the majesty of the Prophets, and, above all, that easy sweetness in the New Testament, where the glory of heaven is set forth in a grave and moving expression, which yet reaches not the height of the subject: not like the flights of rhetoric, which set out small matters in great words; but the holy scriptures touch the heart, raise expectation, confirm our hope, strengthen our faith, give peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which is inexpressible. All which you will experience when you once come to believe, you will then "bring forth these fruits of the Spirit," when you "receive the word with pure affection," as we pray in our Litany.

3. But, sir, if there is truth in the Alcoran, then the holy scriptures are the word of God; for the

Alcoran says so, and that it was sent to confirm them, even the scriptures of both the Old and New Testament: and it expressly owns our Jesus to be the Messiah. At the end of the fourth chapter it has these words; “The Messiah, Jesus, the Son of Mary, is a prophet and an angel of God, his Word and his Spirit, which he sent to Mary.” But it gives him not the name of Son of God, for this wise reason, chap. vi. “How shall God have a son who hath no wives?” Yet it owns Jesus to be born of a pure virgin, without a man, by the operation of the Spirit of God. And in the same chapter this Mahomet acknowledges his own ignorance, and says, “I told you not that I had in my power all the treasures of God, neither that I had knowledge of the future and past, nor do affirm that I am an angel, I only act what hath been inspired into me; is the blind like him that seeth clearly?” And after says, “I am not your tutor, every thing hath its time, you shall hereafter understand the truth.”

This is putting off, and bidding them expect some other after Mahomet. But our Jesus said he was our tutor and teacher, and that there was none to come after him. Mahomet said he was no angel, but that Jesus was an angel of God: but when God bringeth Jesus into the world, he saith, *Let all the* Heb. i. 6. *angels of God worship him.* And he made him Lord of all the angels. Mahomet knew not what was past or to come: but our Jesus knew all things, and what was in the heart of every man, (John ii. 24, 25.) which none can do but God only, 1 Kings viii. 39. and foretold things to come, to the end of the world. Mahomet had not all the treasures of

Col. ii. 3, 9. God; but in Jesus *are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

Again, Mahomet never called himself the Messiah, or the Word or Spirit of God; yet all these appellations he gives to our Jesus.

There were prophecies of Jesus, which we have seen; were there any of Mahomet? None, except of the false Christs and false prophets, which Jesus told should come after him, and bid us beware of them, for that they should deceive many.

4. *Deist.* But if Mahomet gave thus the preference to Christ in every thing, and said that his Alcoran was only a confirmation of the gospel; how came he to set it up against the gospel, and to reckon the Christians among the unbelievers?

Chr. No otherwise than as other heretics did, who called themselves the only true Christians, and invented new interpretations of the scriptures. The Socinians now charge whole Christianity with apostasy, idolatry, and polytheism. And the Alcoran is but a system of the old Arianism, ill digested and worse put together, with a mixture of some heathenism and Judaism. For Mahomet's father was an heathen, his mother a Jewess, and his tutor was Sergius the monk, a Nestorian; which sect was a branch of Arianism. These crudely mixed made up the farrago of the Alcoran; but the prevailing part was Arianism. And where that spread itself in the east, there Mahometism succeeded, and sprung out of it; to let all Christians see the horror of that heresy. And our Socinians now among us, who call themselves Unitarians, are much more Mahometans than Christians. For except some personal things

as to Mahomet, they agree almost wholly in his doctrine; and as such addressed themselves to the Morocco ambassador here in the reign of king Charles II. as you may see in the preface to my Dialogues against the Socinians, printed in the year 1708. Nor do they speak more honourably of Christ and the holy scriptures than the Alcoran does. And there is no error concerning Christ in the Alcoran but what was broached before by the heretics of Christianity, as that Christ did not suffer really, but in appearance only, or that some other was crucified in his stead, but he taken up into heaven, as the Alcoran speaks.

So that in strictness I should not have reckoned Mahometism as one of the four religions in the world, but as one of the heresies of Christianity. But because of its great name, and its having spread so far in the world by the conquests of Mahomet and his followers, and that it is vulgarly understood to be a distinct religion by itself, therefore I have considered it as such.

And as to your concern in the matter, you see plainly that the Alcoran comes in attestation and confirmation of the facts of Christ, and of the holy scriptures.

Deist. I am not come yet so far as to enter into the disputes of the several sects of Christianity; but as to the fact of Christ and of the scriptures in general, Mahometism, I see, does rather confirm than oppose it.

Chr. What then do you think of Judaism, as it now stands in opposition to Christianity?

Deist. Not only as without any evidence, the time prophesied of for the coming of the Messiah

being long since past ; but all their former evidences turn directly against them, and against any Messiah who ever hereafter should come: as that *the sceptre should not depart from Judah*; that he should *come into the second temple*, that the *sacrifices should cease soon after his death*; that David should *never want a son to sit upon his throne*; that they should *be many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, &c.* which they do not suppose ever will be the case after their Messiah is come: so that they are witnesses against themselves.

Chr. And what do you think of the stories of the heathen gods?

Deist. I believe them no more than all the stories in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: nor did the wiser heathen believe them; only such silly people as suck in all the popish legends without examining.

And to tell you the truth, I thought the same of all the stories in your Bible: but I will take time to examine those proofs you have given me.

For, lastly, we Deists do not dispute against Christianity in behalf of any other religion, of the Jews, or heathens, or Mahometans; all which pretend to revelation; but we are against all revelation, and go only upon bare nature, and what our own reason dictates to us.

Chr. What nature dictates, it dictates to all, at least to the most and the generality of mankind; and if we measure by this, then it will appear a natural notion that there is necessity of revelation in religion; and herein you have all the world against you from the very beginning: and will you plead nature against all these?

Deist. The notion came down from one to another from the beginning, we know not how.

Chr. Then it was either nature from the beginning, or else it was from revelation at the beginning: whence the notion has descended through all posterities to this day.

1. And there wants not reason for this; for when man had fallen, and his reason was corrupted, (as we feel it upon us to this day, as sensibly as the diseases and infirmities of the body,) was it not highly reasonable that God should give us a law and directions how to serve and worship him? Sacrifices do not seem to be any natural invention. For why should taking away the life of my fellow-creature be acceptable to God, or a worship of him? it would rather seem an offence against him. But as types of the great and only propitiatory sacrifice of Christ to come, and to keep up our faith in that, the institution given with the revelation of it appears most rational: and that it was necessary the great defection shews, not only of the heathens, but of the Jews themselves; who, though they retained the institution, yet in a great measure lost the true meaning and signification of it; and are now to be brought back to it by reminding them of the institution and the reason of it.

Plato, in his *Alcibiad.* ii. *de Precat.* has the same reasoning, and concludes that we cannot know of ourselves what petitions will be pleasing to God, or what worship to give him; but that it is necessary a lawgiver should be sent from heaven to instruct us: and such a one he did expect, and, "Oh, how greatly do I desire to see that man," says he, "and who he is!" The primitive tradition of the ex-

pected Messiah had no doubt come to him, as to many others of the heathen, from the Jews, and likely from the perusal of their scriptures.

For Plato goes further, and says, (*de Leg.* l. 4.) that this lawgiver must be more than man; for he observes that every nature is governed by another nature that is superior to it, as birds and beasts by man, who is of a distinct and superior nature: so he infers, that this lawgiver, who was to teach man what man could not know by his own nature, must be of a nature that is superior to man, that is, of a divine nature.

Nay, he gives as lively a description of the person, qualifications, life, and death of this divine man, as if he had copied the fifty-third of Isaiah: for he says, (*de Repub.* l. 2.) that this just person must be poor, and void of all recommendations but that of virtue alone; that a wicked world would not bear his instructions and reproof, and therefore, within three or four years after he began to preach, he should be persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, and at last put to death; his word is ἀνασχινδυνλευθήσεται, that is, *cut in pieces*, as they cut their sacrifices.

Deist. These are remarkable passages, as you apply them; and Plato was three hundred years before Christ.

But I incline to think that these notions came rather from such tradition as you speak of, than from nature; and I can see nothing of nature in sacrifices, they look more like institution, come that how it will.

2. *Chr.* It is strange that all the nations in the world should be carried away from what you call nature; unless you will take refuge among the hot-

tentots at the Cape of Good Hope, hardly distinguishable from beasts, to shew us what nature, left to itself, would do; and leave us all the wise and polite world on the side of revelation, either real or pretended, and of opinion that mankind could not be without it: and my business now with you has been to distinguish the real from the pretended.

3. *Deist.* By the account you have given, there is but one religion in the world, nor ever was: for the Jewish was but Christianity in type, though in time greatly corrupted; and the heathen was a greater corruption, and founded the fables of their gods upon the facts of scripture; and the Mahometan, you say, is but a heresy of Christianity; so that all is Christianity still.

Chr. It is true, God gave but one revelation to the world, which was that of Christ; and as that was corrupted, new revelations were pretended. But God has guarded his revelations with such evidences, as it was not in the power of men or devils to counterfeit or contrive any thing like them. Some bear resemblance in one or two features, in the first two or three evidences that I have produced; but as none reach the fourth, so they are all quite destitute of the least pretence to the remaining four: so that when you look upon the face of divine revelation, and take it altogether, it is impossible to mistake it for any of those delusions which the Devil has set up in imitation of it: and they are made to confirm it, because all the resemblance they have to truth is that wherein they are any ways like it; but when compared with it, they shew as an ill-drawn picture, half man, half beast, in presence of the beautiful original.

4. *Deist.* It is strange, that if the case be thus plain as you have made it, the whole world is not immediately convinced.

Chr. If the seed be never so good, yet if it be sown upon stones or among thorns, it will bring forth nothing. There are hearts of stone, and others so filled with the love of riches, with the cares and pleasures of this life, that they will not see, they have not a mind to know any thing which they think would disturb them in their enjoyments, or lessen their opinion of them; for that would be taking away so much of their pleasure. Therefore it is no easy matter to persuade men to place their happiness in future expectations, which is the import of the gospel. And in pressing this, and bidding the worldly-minded abandon their beloved vices, and telling the fatal consequences of them, we must expect to meet, not only with their scorn and contempt, but their utmost rage and impatience to get rid of us, as so many enemies of their lusts and pleasures. This is the cross which our Saviour prepared all his disciples to bear, who were to fight against flesh and blood, and all the allurements of the world: and it is a greater miracle that they have had so many followers in this, than that they have gained to themselves so many enemies. The world is a strong man, and till a stronger than he comes (that is, the full persuasion of the future state) he will keep possession: *and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* But we are told also, that this faith is the gift of God; for all the evidence in the world will not reach the heart, unless it be prepared (like the good ground) to receive the doctrine that is taught: till then, prejudice

will create obstinacy, which will harden the heart like a rock, and cry, *Non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris!* "I will not be persuaded, though I should " be persuaded!"

You must consider under this head too, the many that have not yet heard of the gospel; and of those that have, the far greater number who have not the capacity or opportunity to examine all the evidences of Christianity, but take things upon trust, just as they are taught. And how many others are careless, and will not be at the pains, though they want not capacity to inquire into the truth! All these classes will include the greatest part of mankind; the ignorant, the careless, the vicious, and so the obstinate, the ambitious, and the covetous, whose minds the god of this world hath blinded.

But yet in the midst of all this darkness God hath not left himself without witness, which will be apparent to every diligent and sober inquirer that is willing and prepared to receive the truth.

5. Good sir, let me ask you, though you are of no religion, as you say, but what you call natural, yet would you not think me very brutal, if I should deny that ever there was such a man as Alexander or Cæsar, or that they did such things? If I should deny all history, or that Homer or Virgil, Demosthenes or Cicero ever wrote such books, would you not think me perfectly obstinate, seized with a spirit of contradiction, and not fit for human conversation?

And yet these things are of no consequence to me, it is not a farthing as to my interest, whether they are true or false.

Will you then think yourself a reasonable man, if in matters of the greatest importance, even your

eternal state, you will not believe those facts which have a thousand times more certain and indisputable evidence? Were there any prophecies of Cæsar or Pompey? were there any types of them, or public institutions appointed by a law, to prefigure the great things that they should do? any persons who went before them, to bear a resemblance of these things, and bid us expect that great event? Was there a general expectation in the world of their coming, before or at the time when they came? and of what consequence was their coming to the world, or to after-ages? no more than a robbery committed a thousand years ago!

Were the Greek and Roman histories wrote by the persons who did the facts, or by eyewitnesses? And for the greater certainty were those histories made the standing law of the country? or were they any more than our Holinshed and Stow, &c.?

Must we believe these on pain of not being thought reasonable men? and are we then unreasonable and credulous, if we believe the facts of the holy Bible? which was the standing law of the people to whom it was given, and wrote or dictated by those who did the facts, with public institutions appointed by them as a perpetual law to all their generations; and which, if the facts had been false, could never have passed at the time when the facts were said to be done; nor for the same reason, if that book had been wrote afterwards, because these institutions (as circumcision, the passover, baptism, &c.) were as notorious facts as any, and that book, saying they commenced from the time that the facts were done, must be found to be false, whenever it was trumped in after-ages, by no such institutions

being then known. Not like the feasts, games, &c. in memory of the heathen gods, which were appointed long after those facts were said to be done; and the like institutions may be appointed to-morrow in memory of any falsehood said to be done a thousand years ago, and so is no proof at all: and though a legend or book of stories of things said to be done many years past may be palmed upon people, yet a book of statutes cannot, by which their causes are tried every day.

Are there such prophecies extant in any profane history so long before the facts there recorded, as there are in the holy scriptures of the coming of the Messiah?

Were there any types or forerunners of the heathen gods, or of Mahomet?

Is there the like evidence of the truth and sincerity of the Greek and Roman historians, as of the penmen of the holy scriptures?

Would these historians have given their lives for the truth of all they wrote?

Did they tell such facts only wherein it was impossible for themselves to be imposed upon, or that they should impose upon others? nothing but what themselves had seen and heard, and they also to whom they spoke?

Did they expect nothing but persecution and death for what they related? and were they bidden to bear it patiently without resistance? Was this the case of the disciples of Mahomet, who were required to fight and conquer with the sword? Did any religion ever overcome by suffering, but the Christian only?

And did any exhibit the future state, and preach the contempt of this world like the Christian?

Deist. That is the reason it has prevailed so little: and yet, considering this, it is strange it has prevailed so much.

6. But there is one thing yet behind, wherein I would be glad to have your opinion, because I find your divines differ about it; and that is, how we should know to distinguish betwixt true and false miracles?

And this is necessary to the subject we are upon: for the force of the facts you allege ends all in this, that such miraculous facts are a sufficient attestation of such persons being sent of God; and consequently, that we are to believe the doctrine which they taught.

You know we Deists deny any such things as miracles, but reduce all to nature. Yet I confess, if I had seen such miracles as are recorded of Moses and of Christ, it would have convinced me: and for the truth of them we must refer to the evidences you have given. But in the mean time, if there is no rule whereby to distinguish betwixt true and false miracles, there is an end of all the pains you have taken. For if the Devil can work such things as appear miracles to me, I am as much persuaded as if they were true miracles, and wrought by God. And so men may be deceived in trusting to miracles.

The common notion of a miracle is what exceeds the power of nature. To which we say, that we know not the utmost of the power of nature, and consequently cannot tell what exceeds it. Nor do you pretend to know the utmost of the power of

spirits, whether good or evil; and how then can you tell what exceeds their power?

I doubt not but you would have thought those to be true miracles which the magicians are said to have wrought in Egypt, but that Moses is said to have wrought miracles that were superior to them.

Chr. Therefore if two powers contend for the superiority, as here God and the Devil did, the best issue can be is to see them wrestle together, and then we shall soon know which is strongest. This was the case of Moses and the magicians, of Christ and the Devil. There was a struggle, and Satan was plainly overcome.

I confess I know not the power of spirits, nor how they work upon bodies. And by the same reason that a spirit can lift a straw, he may a mountain, and the whole earth, for ought I know: and may do many things which would appear true miracles to me; and so might deceive me. And all I have to trust to in this case is, the restraining power of God, that he will not permit the Devil so to do: and were it not for this, I doubt not but the Devil could take away my life in an instant, or inflict terrible diseases upon me, as upon Job.

And I think this consideration is the strongest motive in the world to keep us in a constant dependence upon God, that we live in the midst of such powerful enemies, as we can by no means resist of ourselves, and are in their power every minute, when God shall withdraw his protection from us.

And it is in their power likewise to work signs and wonders to deceive us, if God permit. And herein the great power and goodness of God is

manifest, that he has never yet permitted the Devil to work miracles in opposition to any whom he sent, except where the remedy was at hand, and to shew his power the more, as in the case of Moses and the magicians, &c.

And this is further evident, because God has at other times, and upon other occasions, suffered the Devil to exert his power, as to make fire descend upon Job's cattle, &c. But here was no cause of religion concerned, nor any truth of God in debate.

Deist. But your Christ has foretold, Matt. xxiv. 24, that *false Christs and false prophets shall arise, who shall shew great signs and wonders; to deceive, if possible, the very elect.* And it is said, 2 Thess. ii. 9, that there shall be a wicked one, *whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.* And it is supposed, Deut. xiii. 1, &c. that a false prophet may give a *sign or a wonder*, to draw men after false gods. Here then is sign against sign, wonder against wonder; and which of these shall we believe?

Chr. The first, no doubt. For God cannot contradict himself, nor will shew signs and wonders, in opposition to that law which he has established by so many signs and wonders. Therefore in such a case we must conclude, that God has permitted the Devil to exert his power, as against Moses and Christ, for the trial of our faith, and to shew the superior power of God more eminently in overcoming all the power of the enemy.

But, as I said before, we have a more sure word, that is, proof, than even these miracles exhibited to our outward senses, which is the word of prophecy.

Let then any false Christ who shall pretend to come hereafter, shew such a book as our Bible, which has been so long in the world (the most ancient book now extant) testifying of him, foretelling the time and all other circumstances of his coming, with his sufferings and death, and all these prophecies exactly fulfilled in him. And till he can do this, he cannot have that evidence which our Christ has, and he must be a false Christ to me, and all the signs that he can shew will be but lying wonders to any that is truly established in the Christian faith.

But it may be a trial too strong for those careless ones, who will not be at the pains to inquire into the grounds of their religion, but take it upon trust, as they do the fashions, and mind not to frame their lives according to it, but are immersed in the world, and the pleasures of it.

7. And it will be a just judgment upon these, that they who shut their eyes against all the clear evidences of the gospel, should be given up to believe a lie. And the reason is given, 2 Thess. ii. 12, because they *had pleasure in unrighteousness*. They *loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*.

So that I must repeat what I said before, that there is a preparation of the heart (as of the ground) to receive the truth: and where the doctrine does not please, no evidence, how clear soever, will be received. God cannot enter till mammon be dispossessed; we cannot serve these two masters. He who has a clear sight of heaven cannot value the dull pleasures of this life; and it is impossible that he who is drowned in sense can relish spiritual things. The love of this world is enmity against God: the

first sin was a temptation of sense; and the reparation is to open our eyes to the enjoyment of God. Vice clouds this eye, and makes it blind to the only true and eternal pleasure; it is foolishness to such an one.

This, this, sir, is the *remora* that keeps men from Christianity. It is not want of evidence, but it is want of consideration. I would not say this to you, till I had first gone through all the topics of reason with you, that you might not call it cant. But this is the truth, as David says, *To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.* And our Saviour says, *If any man do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* And *no man can come unto me except the Father draw him.*

This was the reason why St. John the Baptist was sent as a forerunner to prepare the way for Christ, by preaching of repentance, to fit men for receiving the gospel.

And they who repented of their sins upon his preaching did gladly embrace the doctrine of Christ; but they who would not forsake their sins remained obdurate, though otherwise men of sense and learning. As our Saviour told the priests and elders, Matt. xxi. 32, *John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the Publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him.*

And when Christ sought to prepare them for his doctrine, by telling them that *they could not serve God and mammon*, it is said, Luke xvi. 14, *that when the Pharisees, who were covetous, heard these*

things, they derided him. But he instructed them in the next verse, (if they would have received it,) that *what is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God.* And enforced this with the example of the rich man and Lazarus; and said, chap. xviii. 25, *that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* And, chap. xiv. 33, *that whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.* Now take this in the largest sense, that he who is not ready and willing to forsake all, as if he hated them, as Christ said, ver. 26, *If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, &c.* (that is, when they come in competition with any command of Christ,) and *take not up his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple;* how few disciples would he have had in this age! Would all his miracles persuade some to this? The world is too hard for heaven with most men.

Here is the cause of infidelity: the love of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, darken the heart, and like shutters keep out the light of heaven; till they are removed, the light cannot enter. The Spirit of purity and holiness will not descend into a heart full of all uncleanness: if we would invite this guest, we must sweep the house and make it clean.

But this too is of God: for he only can *make a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us.* But he has promised to give this wisdom to those who ask it, and lead a godly life: therefore *ask, and you shall have; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* But do it ardently

and incessantly, as he that striveth for his soul. For *God is gracious and merciful, longsuffering and of great goodness; and those who come to him in sincerity he will in no ways cast out.* Therefore *pray in faith, nothing doubting.* And what you pray for, (according to his will,) believe that you receive it, and you shall receive it.

To his grace I commend you.

8. And with the fulness of the Gentiles, O that it would please God to take the veil off the heart of the Jews, and let them see, that as they have been deceived by many false Messiahs since Christ came, so none whom they expect hereafter can answer the prophecies of the Messiah, (some of which I have named,) and therefore no such can be the Messiah who is prophesied of in their own scriptures.

And let them see and consider how that fatal curse they imprecated upon themselves, *His blood be on us and our children*, has cleaved unto them beyond all their former sins, and even repeated idolatry, from which (to shew that this is not the cause of their present dispersion) they have kept themselves free ever since; and for which their longest captivity was but seventy years, and then prophets were sent to them, to comfort them, and assure them of a restoration: but now they have been about seventeen hundred years dispersed over all the earth, without any prophet, or prospect of their deliverance; that the whole world might take notice of this before unparalleled judgment, not known to any nation that ever yet was upon the face of the earth; so punished, and so preserved for judgment, and I hope, at last, for a more wonderful

mercy: *For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

OF
PRIVATE JUDGMENT AND AUTHORITY
IN
MATTERS OF FAITH.

I. **A**LL the religions and all the sects in the world are built upon the dispute betwixt these two; whether men are to govern themselves by their own private judgment, or to be determined by the authority of others, in their faith or religion.

II. The effects of private judgment are these: multiplicity of sects and opinions, perpetual wrangling, without any umpire or judge of controversy; whence come inveterate prejudices against each other, animosities, strifes, envyings, and all the war of religion; which the most of any one thing embroils the peace of the world, and is always the chief pretence in the civil wars of nations within themselves, and most commonly in the wars of kingdoms against kingdoms. To remedy all which evils, some think there is no other method but to have some settled judge of controversy, to whom appeals may be made, and whose determination should end all disputes concerning religion; and this not only as to the outward peace of the church, and consequently of the world, but even as to men's inward persuasion and belief, especially in matters of faith; for how otherwise, say they, shall every private person determine himself as to the articles of faith?

The greatest part of mankind are ignorant, and must depend upon the judgment of others; and what wild work would it make, to leave every man, woman, and child to pick out their own faith, either from the strength of their own reason, or from the scriptures (suppose) amongst us? we should have as many religions almost as men, and as many different faiths. And suppose the scriptures to be an infallible and complete rule of faith, yet how shall we agree about the true meaning and interpretation of them? We see every sect quote scripture, and every one has his own interpretation of it: this is endless, and utter confusion; these are the inconveniences which attend leaving every man to follow his own private judgment.

III. But then, on the other hand, there are likewise difficulties in our submitting our private judgment to authority. First, because it is left to our private judgment to choose that authority to which we ought to submit. How otherwise shall a man determine himself, whether he should be a Christian, a Jew, a Mahometan, or an heathen? for there is no judge over all these. And this is the first and the most material step he can and must make in the choice of his religion; and if there is nothing to guide him herein (under God) but his own private judgment, why should not that, say others, be likewise sufficient to guide him in the disputes there are among the subdivisions of each of these religions? For if I must trust to my own private judgment in the most material point, why not in the lesser? nay, the belief of a God, which is the first and highest point in all religions, depends upon private judgment, and not upon authority: it would

be blasphemy to put it upon any human authority; for that would set such authority above God. If I believe James upon the word of John, I must have a greater confidence in John than in James, in the recommender than in the person who is recommended by him: so it is if I should believe a God upon the authority of any church, it would certainly follow, that my faith was more in that church than in God; and I have no more for the authority of that church, than the judgment I pass upon the arguments offered to convince me of it. So that all rests upon my own private judgment still; and it is impossible I can be more sure of any thing than of the certainty of my own judgment. I cannot be surer of the being of a God, than of the truth of those reasons which persuade me to believe it. And all the reasons before given for submitting my private judgment to authority suppose the truth of my judgment, and appeal to it; why else does any persuade another? And private judgment can never be so fatally mistaken as in submitting to authority, if it should judge wrong; because in all other errors it may be set right again, by stronger reasons being offered on the other side: but if a man once resign his reason, and give it up absolutely to authority, there are no means left to retrieve him; if he has judged amiss in the choice of such a guide, whom he thinks to be infallible, he must then follow his guide, though in all the wild delusions that are possible; for he must examine no more; his principle is, to go on blindfold; he has plucked out his eyes that he may see the better!

And the question will now remain, whether greater mischiefs and inconveniences have befallen

mankind in the one way or in the other, in following their private judgment, or in submitting implicitly to authority? And we may argue this case: for let any man talk what he will, and think never so much that he has abandoned his private judgment, yet it is not in his power while he remains a man; it is inseparable from human nature, and cannot be utterly extinguished, though some have so defaced it that it is hardly visible.

But if in this inquiry it should be found that greater mischiefs have attended private judgment than authority, yet would that be no greater argument against private judgment than it would be against free-will, or any other composition of our nature, if the mischiefs it occasions were more than the good: we cannot alter our nature, it must be as it is. Perhaps men make use of their hands to more destruction in wars, murders, robberies, thefts, &c. than any good they do with them; yet this would be an ill argument for cutting off the hands of our children as soon as they were born; and it would be worse to divest men of their understanding, because their private judgment might mislead them.

1. But, however, let us go on to the comparison. The Christians will easily allow all the heathen as misled by authority; for they go on in the track of their fathers, without examination of the grounds or reasons of their religion; but they have no notion of an infallible judge, and therefore were more easily converted, and now make the great body of Christians.

2. But the Jews stood out at first, and still continue in their infidelity, upon the single point of authority, because Christ was rejected by their church.

And it is the same point of the authority of the church which rivets the church of Rome in all her errors, and makes any reformation impossible. And indeed I see not how a Jew can be converted upon this principle, which is common to them and the church of Rome. But this will appear more plainly by hearing each of them defend himself. And in this conversation which I now introduce, I will bring in a church of England man, to shew what that true authority is which God has delegated to his church; for no doubt she has an authority, and a great one; and then a dissenter shall argue for private judgment against that authority: and this will put the matter in as clear a light as any way I can contrive. To begin then:

IV. *Jew.* Do not you of the church of Rome lay down this as a foundation principle, that it is inconsistent with the goodness of God to leave men without a sufficient guide in matters of faith; and not to preserve that guide from misleading us, to the ruin of our souls?

Rom. Catholic. Yes, this is our principle, as I suppose it is yours.

Jew. It is ours too; and that this guide is the church. And therefore we reject your Messiah, because the church did reject him. And ours was indisputably the only church of God then in the world, whereas other Christian churches dispute this point with the church of Rome.

R. C. There was but one Christian church from the beginning of the world, under divers dispensations. Yours was one of these; which ended when the Messiah came; the church was then in him, and removed from the synagogue.

Jew. Did God then forsake his church and choose another? But you say, that Christ is not the church, but came to redeem the church, he did not come to redeem himself. You call the church his body: then he had no such body when he came at first, unless it were our church. And he owned ours to be the church all his lifetime; and commanded his disciples to be obedient to her, as *sitting in Moses's seat*: and she was owned as such by his apostles. But how did he prove himself to be the Messiah?

Matt. xxiii.
2, 3.
Acts iv. 8.
xxiii. 5.

R. C. He proved it evidently by his miracles, by his heavenly doctrine, and by the prophecies of him in your own scriptures.

Jew. But the church determined against him in all these; and said, that he wrought his miracles by Beelzebub; that he was a deceiver in his doctrine; and that he was not the Messiah of whom the scriptures spoke. Now, sir, pray tell me, who is the proper interpreter of scripture? is it the church, or is it left to every man's private judgment? and take this along with you, that no Jew turned Christian, but he who preferred his own private judgment to the authority of the church; but all who adhered to the church as their infallible guide, and left the interpretation of scripture to her, did reject your Christ, as we all do to this day.

And we build upon the promises of God made to his church, to our church; that the *lips of the priests should preserve knowledge, and that we should seek the law at his mouth: for that he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.*

Mal. ii. 7.

And as for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not de-

Isa. lix. 21.

part out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

And this method of hearkening to the church is
 Isa. xxxv. 8. *called the way of holiness, and a highway for plainness; that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.* And we have many other texts to the same purpose.

R. C. These were meant of the Christian church which was to come.

Jew. But they were made to our church. And if they did not belong to our church, then we have been misled all this while, and we have had no guide of controversy; and so the goodness of God has failed, which you, as well as we, own is obliged not to leave men without such a guide.

R. C. If you had hearkened to your own prophets, they would infallibly have led you to our Christ, for they spoke of him.

Jew. This is still the question, whether your Christ was the Messiah, or not? And let me ask you, are we not obliged to take the judgment of the present church in every age? or may any man in his private judgment depart from the decision of the church under which he lives, and appeal to the church in primitive times? has not the church in one age as much authority as in former ages? is not her commission perpetual? Therefore the church in being at that time when your Christ came, was the only judge then to which all ought to have recourse, and by whose judgment they ought to abide; and she was then the only authentic interpreter of scriptures.

The promises of perpetuity, infallibility, &c. were

made to us Jews; you Gentiles were not then concerned. And will you not give us leave to understand our own law best, wherein we were born and bred, and which we received from our fathers, who were perpetually conversant in it, and made it their study day and night? Yet you now would exclude us, and tell us you understand our law better than ourselves; and that it meant you all that while; and you quote it on your side. But if it did ultimately refer to you, yet surely that was not so literally and primarily as to us, who were named, and were first in possession of it; if it did descend from us to you, yet we must not be overlooked; and if these promises were not made good to us, you can have no title to them, who only inherit them after us; can the child inherit more than what his father left him? and if the elder brother was dispossessed, to make room for the younger, as you love to speak, yet the younger does but succeed to what the elder had before. Therefore these promises which were made to us, the elder brother, cannot belong to you the younger, unless they did first belong to us; otherwise they did belong to none at all when they were made, nor for many ages after.

V. Church of England man. You are both upon one bottom, the authority of the church; and both cannot be right. But the Jew has the advantage in this, that you both allow his church to have been the only true church in the world for many ages together; whereas the Jew does not allow the church of Rome ever to have been any true church, or that salvation is to be had in her.

R. C. This is to retort the argument we use against you of the church of England, that you own

ours to have been a true and orthodox church; and then we ask, when did she fail? But we say, the church can never fail; and that salvation is only to be had with us.

C. E. I did indeed bring it in for this purpose, to shew you the fallacy of that popular argument by which you gain proselytes among the vulgar sort; viz. the church of England allows salvation may be had in the church of Rome; but the church of Rome denies salvation may be had in the church of England; therefore it is safer, by confession on both sides, to be of the church of Rome than of the church of England. This I have heard often urged, and it seems to carry a great deal in it, at first sight, with the unthinking people: but when they see that all the force in it strikes equally against Christianity in favour of Judaism, I hope it will make them consider and examine into the bottom of this pretence; which is grounded upon the same error that misled the Jews, viz. the absolute and indefeasible authority of the church, in opposition to private judgment.

Dissenter. I have now a fair field opened to me against you of the church of England; for we set up our own private judgment against the authority of your church.

C. E. You shall be heard in your place. But the *R. C.* has not yet done with what I know he has to allege.

VI. R. C. No, I have not. For since my argument is now with you, I have more to urge than I could against the Jew; which is, the proofs out of the New Testament for the infallibility and perpetuity of our church; such as, *Upon this rock I will*

build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it—Tell it unto the church; but if Matt. xviii.
he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee ^{17.}
as an heathen man and a Publican: and when the John xvi.
Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all ^{13.}
truth. And there are other texts which you know we urge to this purpose.

C. E. But not one of them that names the church of Rome: and here, you know, is our dispute. You call yourselves the catholic church, and confine whole Christianity within the communion of the pope of Rome, as the principle of unity, and head of all; and yet there is not one word in the scripture of either the pope or church of Rome: so that this must be determined purely by private judgment. And this is your whole foundation, as you stand distinguished from us and other Christian churches. And if private judgment is to be determined by vote, there are ten to one against the church of Rome upon this point; and that not only of those who have broke off from her since the reformation, but the Greek church, and other numerous churches in Asia, and Africa, did never own the supremacy of Rome, nor do to this day. And these, without the reformation, will far outnumber, not only what can be properly called the church of Rome now at this time, but in the largest extent that ever she was, even before the reformation.

VII. *R. C.* But the church of Rome is the mother-church.

C. E. How can she be the mother of those churches which never descended from her? There were churches of the Gentiles before there was any at Rome: *the disciples were called Christians first* Acts xi. 26.

in Antioch. But it is certain that the Jewish Christian church was the mother of all other Christian churches: and so Christ did ordain, that the *Gospel should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* And the apostles went about, *preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.* And thus it continued till the vision of the sheet to St. Peter, Acts x; for they did not know before, that the Gentiles were to be made partakers of the gospel. Therefore all the promises of Christ which you have named were made to this first and mother Christian church of the Jews, and she was in possession of them before there was one Christian in Rome, or any where among the Gentiles.

R. C. But Rome is become the mother-church since.

C. E. Not to half, as I have shewed above. But if the mother-church, and the promises made to it, can be transferred from one church to another, then it may be transferred from Rome, as it was from Jerusalem, and so without end. And to what particular church will you then fix these promises of perpetuity, &c.? You must come to us, who believe that Christ will always have a church upon earth, and that the gates of hell shall not finally prevail against his church in general; but that there is no promise to secure any particular church that her candlestick may not be removed, as others have been.

R. C. But what church was that of which Christ spoke when he said, *Tell it unto the church, &c.*

C. E. It was every particular church: for the case there put is of private difference betwixt man and man, *If thy brother trespass against thee—*.

There Christ directs first private admonition, then the intervention of friends; but if that would not do, then *tell it to the church*, that is, to the church or congregation of which you are both members. It is impossible to bring every private quarrel before the catholic church. There was nothing at all of the faith concerned in this case, nor in the xvii. of Deut. (often quoted by you for the infallible judgment of the church;) the case there put is only about civil causes, as you may see, ver. 8. And the civil judge is joined with the priests in this. But neither God nor Christ does any where send us to a judge of faith. There cannot be any judge of faith but God alone.

VIII. *R. C.* Why do you say there cannot? No doubt there may be such a judge, whether there is or not.

C. E. The best way is to put it to a trial. Let us begin then with the Creed: the first article is, *I believe in God, the Father Almighty.* Now I ask, who is judge of the article? Who is judge, whether there is a God or not? And so of the rest: Whether there is a Christ? Whether he died, rose, &c.? Whether there is a Holy Ghost? Whether there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a life eternal?

R. C. This is an odd way of turning the question. There is no such judge of these things, as that we were not to believe there is a God, or Christ, &c. if such judge should so determine.

C. E. Then there is no judge of faith. And now I will give you the reason why there cannot be such a judge among men: because where any thing is determined by authority, such authority must be

superior to what it determines. As in civil causes, the authority of the king, by whose commission they are determined, is superior to the right or property of the subject. And for the same reason, if I should believe a God, or a Christ, &c. upon any authority whatsoever, that authority with me must be prior and superior to what I believe upon that authority: and thus the church (supposing it such a judge of faith) would have an authority above God, or Christ, or any thing contained in the Creed. And therefore I think it is plain, that we receive not the Creed upon the authority of the church.

IX. *R. C.* You had never had the Creed but by the church.

C. E. That may be. The church taught it me, proposed it to me, and convinced me of the truth of it; but not by way of authority; for I could not believe the authority of the church till I was first convinced by the scriptures that Christ had established such a church, and vested her with such authority. So that I receive the scriptures upon the testimony, not authority, of the church; and I examine that testimony, as I do other facts, till I have satisfied my private judgment there is no other way. As suppose an atheist to be convinced by me of the being of a God; he then believes it, and I may be said to be an instrument in this. But how foolish would it be in me, nay blasphemous, to assume authority over him for this, and say that it was by my authority he believed a God, and therefore that he was obliged to believe every thing else I told him, without examining; because if my authority was taken for the being of God, then nothing surely of lesser consequence could be excepted from it?

This is the manner of argumentation for receiving the faith from the authority of the church: this is that circle, from which you can never rid yourselves, of believing the scriptures upon the authority of the church, and then back again, of believing the church upon the authority of the scriptures: this makes each of them of greater authority than the other, and each of them of lesser!

And now tell me, if I have nothing but my private judgment for the being of a God, shall the church pretend to an authority over private judgment, and that I shall not be allowed to make use of it in any thing she proposes to me?

X. *R. C.* In smaller things you may, which we call matters of opinion, but not in matters of faith, for then who shall be judge?

C. E. I think the reverse of this to be the truth; viz. that this question, Who shall be judge? and the submitting of our private judgment, is only in smaller matters, and of little consequence: as in temporal affairs and disputes of *meum* and *tuum*, and in determining rites and ceremonies in the church, which are not of the essentials of religion, and in matters of discipline for the better government of the church; in these things we ought to submit our private judgment, and if there be a dispute about them, it is very proper to ask, who shall be judge; because the contest and breach of unity in the church is of far more importance than any of these things, let them be determined which way it will. But in matters of faith it is quite otherwise; and there to ask who shall be judge is most abhorrent; as who shall be judge whether there is

a God or not, or a Christ: and so of other articles of the Creed, as I have shewed you before.

God has subjected our lives and fortunes to the absolute disposal of civil government, because these are no great things, and we must give them up however: and in these there is a necessity of determining the question, Who shall be judge? Without this, there can be no end of civil disputes, and government would be impracticable; there must be a last resort, from which there is no appeal, otherwise there would be an eternal round, or a *progressus in infinitum*, and no contest about civil affairs could ever be determined: and there is no security in this, that an unjust judgment will not be given at last; nor is that of great moment, for, as I said, we are not much hurt by it.

But God has taken more care of our souls, and not put our faith under the absolute dominion of any. The apostles disclaimed it, and when they exhorted and instructed, they said, *Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.* And again, *If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, let him be anathema*, that is, *accursed*: and this was to be known only by private judgment, and is a very positive decision for it, against authority of the highest sort possible next under God himself.

It is this mistaken notion of authority which detains you of the church of Rome, and shuts your ears from hearkening to reason. You stop us every turn with the authority of the church! nay, you bid us deny our reason, and our senses too, in obedience to the church!

2 Cor. i.
24.

Gal. i. 8.

And it is this very same mistake which hardened the Jews against Christ, as they said to those who were charmed with his doctrine and had seen his miracles, and told them, *Never man spake like this* John vii. 48, 49. *man*; but the chief priests, &c. answered, *Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.* Here was a full stop to all further inquiries concerning him, whether he were the true Messiah or not. They must learn this from the church, and not trust to their private judgment, let the case be never so plain!

XI. And I cannot here but observe a wonderful providence in the economy of God. He might, no doubt, have so disposed things, if he had pleased, as that Christ should have been received by his own, and acknowledged by the church; but he chose the way, wherein the husbandmen should kill the heir, and the builders reject the corner-stone, that the pride of man might be humbled, and our faith stand in God alone. Christ was denied and persecuted by all the powers on earth, as well ecclesiastical as civil; and of his own apostles, one betrayed him, another forswore him, all forsook him; *He trod* Isa. lxxiii. 3. *the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with him.* And this was prophesied of before, that he should be *a stone of stumbling and a rock* Isa. viii. 14. *of offence to both the houses of Israel,* and that their eyes should be blinded that they should not know him when he came; as I have shewed before in the Truth of Christianity demonstrated, p. 341. And what was it blinded them against this full and clear evidence, but their notion of the authority of the church? And was it not to beat down and for ever

silence this pretence, that Christ would not suffer the church to give attestation to him, nor come by their recommendation? Should the sun borrow light from the moon? yet this pretence is taken up again by the church of Rome. It never was maintained by any but by the church of the Jews, and of Rome; and we have seen strange effects of it in both!

XII. *R. C.* After all you have said, how do you know the canonical book of scripture but by the authority of the church?

C. E. Not at all by her authority, but by her evidence: there is a great difference; I pray you to consider it. There were false Gospels and false Epistles inscribed to several of the apostles, set up by the heretics in the first age; and they were detected in that same age, while the ^aoriginals of what the apostles wrote were still in being. But the heretics could not produce the originals of theirs, nor did their copies agree one with another, as Eusebius tells us: and this was not deciding the matter by authority, but by plain evidence of a fact, as of any other forgery, or supposititious writing.

But you state the matter so, as if there were a heap of papers, of many hundred years past, some genuine, some spurious, all confusedly thrown together, and that it were left to the church to distinguish these by her authority, and that we were obliged so to receive them, without knowing any more of the matter, and had nothing but her authority to trust to. But this, sir, is far from being the case: the canon of the scripture was settled at

^a Euseb. Hist. l. v. c. 28.

the time when it could be done by full evidence, and the notoriety of the thing was known to all: and we have received it down from that time in copies so universally spread through the Christian world, that it is impossible to add or detract from it without a general detection of the forgery by all churches: and this has preserved the canon of the New Testament so entire, that there is no difference about it between you and us, or any other Christian church.

It is true indeed we differ with you as to the canon of the Old Testament; but we have the Jews on our side for this, who never received those books we call apocryphal into their canon: they were not wrote in their language, at least most of them. And I might bring in the Jew again to reason the case with you, how you came to understand their canon better than themselves, who were in possession of it many hundred years before Christianity, and were so careful as to number the very letters? But I will not prolong this, nor enter into the particular disputes betwixt your church and ours, my business now being only to consider the foundation principle of the authority of the church, upon which all the rest depend. I will only say this further as to these apocryphal books, that St. Jerome, in his *Prologus Galeatus*, printed before all your vulgar Latin Bibles that I have seen, excludes all these by name out of the canon, and says the church did so too: and we may suppose that so learned a father, who had himself translated the scriptures, knew what the church received in his time: and it seems strange to me, that such a flagrant testimony against you should stand in the front of your own Bibles.

But if you would have further satisfaction as to this point, I refer you to bishop Cosins's elaborate History of the Canon of the Scriptures, which has not been answered by any of your church that I hear of; for it seems to carry demonstration along with it, proceeding wholly upon fact, and giving vouchers in abundance: and as to the books themselves, let any one read the conclusion of the Book of Maccabees, 2 Maccab. xv. 39, 40. and see if he can persuade himself that such words could come out of the mouth of God.

XIII. But to return. The great cause I conceive of the church of the Jews, and the church of Rome, having fallen into this mistake of their own absolute and unlimited authority and indefeasible perpetuity, is, their not rightly apprehending the nature of the promises which God makes to man. For though they may be full and unconditional, as expressed in the words, yet they are to be understood with an implied condition of our obedience; and we are not to think that he is bound by his promise, though we are never so wicked. No, God will not thus be mocked! If he has spoken concerning *a land to pluck up and to destroy*, if they *repent*, he will also *repent of the evil*: and if he has promised to *build and to plant*, if they do evil he will *repent of the good*. See what he said to Eli the high priest for his not restraining his sons, who were wicked in their ministry; *Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.*

Jer. xviii.
7, &c.

1 Sam. ii.
30.

God had promised to the children of Israel, whom he brought out of Egypt, to carry them into the land of Canaan to possess it ; but upon their murmuring, he condemned them all (except two) to die in the wilderness, and said, *ye shall know my breach of promise* ; in the margin it is, *the altering of my purpose*. Num. xiv. 34.

Obey my voice, says God, *that I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers*. Jer. x. 4, 5.

It would be tedious to go through the multitude of texts to this purpose : many promises were made to the people of Israel, and to the temple, of perpetuity for ever, yet both it and they were destroyed for their wickedness ; all which will not yet persuade them that these promises were conditional. This was the hardest point to gain upon them. John the Baptist began with this, to shew them the vanity of their hopes, in saying, *We have Abraham to our father*. And this was what our blessed Saviour set forth to them in the parable of the vineyard and the wicked husbandmen : but they would not understand ; they still stuck to their own being the only *peculium* of God ; they could bear nothing against this. When our Lord told them of God's shewing to some of the Gentiles more favour than the Israelites, in the instances of Naaman the Syrian, and the widow of Sarepta, they were *filled with wrath, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down headlong*. They heard St. Paul with attention *unto this word*, of his being sent to the Gentiles, and then they *lift up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth : for it is not fit that he should live*. And they cried out, Luke iv. 25, &c. Acts xxii. 21, &c.

and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air. Such transports have I seen among some of your communion, when their title to be the only *peculium* was questioned! And yet you have less pretence than the church of the Jews; for there were many promises made to them by name, but not one to the church of Rome by name, nor by any implication which does not depend upon great uncertainties at best, and must be resolved wholly by private judgment at last.

XIV. Dissenter. It is now time for me to come in: I stand upon private judgment; and if you condemn me, you condemn that too.

C. E. No doubt private judgment is often mistaken; therefore you must take pains to have your judgment rightly informed.

Diss. Do you inform me then: you have run down the authority of the church; I see no authority you have left her.

C. E. Because I do not allow her an absolute, unconditional, and infallible authority, and that in matters of faith, you think she has no authority at all.

Diss. Your twentieth article (of late so much contested) says, she has "authority in controversies of faith."

C. E. Yes, but far from infallible. You see how it is there limited, not to be repugnant to holy scripture, &c. She has authority as a "witness" and "keeper of holy writ," as the article words it.

Diss. What authority is that?

C. E. The same that is acknowledged in your Westminster Confession of Faith, chap. xxxi. "ministerially to determine controversies of faith," as you there word it. But in regulating the worship

of God, and in discipline for the better government of the church, there to determine authoritatively: and this is perfectly agreeable to our twentieth article, against which you have wrangled perpetually, and of late have called in the Deists to your aid, at least accepted of their assistance in their Priestcraft in Perfection, against this twentieth article. For their information therefore, and by your own confession, the authority of the church stands thus; to determine controversies of faith only ministerially, as the ordinary dispensers of the word, as servants of Christ, and ministers of the gospel; not absolutely and authoritatively, as lords of our faith, and infallible interpreters of scripture: and it is most reasonable to submit and acquiesce in such determination of the church, except where the case is notorious, and out of doubt, and of the last consequence, as of the case of the Messiah when he came: for unconditional obedience in matters of faith is due to none but God, nor has he delegated any such power to men. Will it therefore follow that he has given no power at all to his church?

It was a great power was given when he said, *Go* Mat. xxviii.
ye and teach all nations, baptizing them, &c. And ^{19.}
 he left power with them to invest others with the same authority, without which none can preach the faith, for *how shall they preach except they be sent?* Rom. x. 15.
 And this is an authority relating to faith; as likewise the power of the keys, which implies all authority of government, as being *the pillar and* 1 Tim. iii.
ground of the faith. And Christ has promised to ^{15.}
 ratify in heaven the censures of the church when justly inflicted upon earth.

R.C. Why do you limit the text? the words

Matt. xviii. are general, *Whatsoever ye shall bind, &c.* and,
 18. *Whose soever sins ye remit, &c.*
 John xx.

23.

C. E. This is what I just now told of you, that you will take the words of God without any implied condition. Yet you yourselves cannot deny but that there are conditions here implied, as of contrition in the penitent, &c.; and if the censures of the church are inflicted *clave errante*, as you term it, that is, not justly, you say not that such sentence will be ratified in heaven.

Matt. xxiii.

2, 3.

XV. *R. C.* Christ said, *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.* What exception do you here find from this absolute authority recognised by Christ to be in the church?

C. E. By this you own the church then to have been in the synagogue of the Scribes and Pharisees; and were they infallible? Were all the Jews who had believed in Christ obliged to renounce him, because so commanded by these Scribes and Pharisees? But, sir, there is not a word of believing in all this text. They were only to observe and do what the synagogue should bid them; and no doubt the condition was implied of such commands being lawful, and agreeable to the word of God. And this is the full of what is meant in our obedience to any church or authority upon earth: and being worded here to the utmost extent, shews how the like expressions are to be understood when applied to others. This is beyond, *Feed my sheep*, or, *Tell it to the church*; how then shall so much be inferred from these, when far less is meant in more positive and comprehensive words? It is said, *Children, obey your parents in all things.* And if this had been said of

our obedience to the church, it could have meant no more than as it stands in relation to parents; viz. in all their lawful commands. And private judgment must determine that in the one case as well as in the other.

But since you bring this text to shew the authority of your church, you shall have it; and take it altogether, in what Christ says of these same Scribes and Pharisees. In the same discourse where he commands this obedience to be paid them, he calls them *blind guides*, leading the blind into the ditch: he bids his disciples *beware of their doctrine*, and Matt. xvi. charges them with having made the *commandments* ^{12.} Mark vii. *of God of none effect through their traditions, and* ^{13.} *many such like things which they did* before his coming into the world.

Now if your plea should hold, of the church being transferred to the Messiah at his coming, yet you will be obliged to maintain the infallibility of the Jewish church before that time; else your principle falls, of the goodness of God being engaged to afford men always an infallible guide, and likewise your argument from the promises made to the church of the Jews in the Old Testament of infallibility, perpetuity, &c.; which you quote now for your own church. You have brought a very hard task upon yourselves, either to maintain the infallibility of the Jewish church all along before Christ came, or else to lose your own. You must answer what I have quoted, of the Jews having *rejected the commandments of God, that they might keep their own tradition*. And consider that it takes a long time to make a tradition: therefore these false doctrines, with which Christ here charges them, were of old

standing among them before he came: and they
 Mark vii. 5. called it *the tradition of their elders*, that is, of those before them, and of the governors of their church, called generally by the name of *their elders*.

But let us look into their former times. We find them all involved in the idolatry of the golden calf, even Aaron the high priest, and whatever can be
 Exod. xxxii. 1, &c. called their church, when they thought they had lost Moses, upon his tarrying so long on the mount. There is not one exception made of any of the people who did not come in fully to this idolatry. And how frequently afterwards did they relapse into
 Dan. ix. 11. this sin? Daniel charges it upon all Israel, as well as upon their kings, princes, &c.; *all the chief of the priests*.

They persecuted their own prophets, and at the
 Jer. xxvi. 8, 11. instigation of their priests: who likewise *persuaded them to ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus*; it was
 Matt. xxvii. 20. their whole sanhedrin, *the chief priests and all the council*. And it was upon the same principle, and their assurance of the infallibility of their church; for, said they, *the law shall not perish from the priest*: therefore, *let us smite Jeremiah, and let us not give heed to any of his words*. Which of the
 Jer. xviii. 18. prophets, says St. Stephen, *have not your fathers persecuted?* Our Saviour told them, *Your fathers killed the prophets, and ye build their sepulchres; and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them who killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers*. Yet they could not see the fallibility of their fathers, nor their own, when they

Dan. ix. 11.

2 Chron.
xxxvi. 14.

Jer. xxvi.

8, 11.

Matt. xxvii.
20.

Mark xiv.
53, 55.

Jer. xviii.
18.

Acts vii. 52.

Matt. xxiii.
29, &c.

were filling up their measure in persecuting the Messiah, as their fathers had the prophets; but they still stuck to their infallibility, that *the law could not perish from the priest*. And, which is more wonderful, you still stick to their infallibility, because you cannot otherwise support your own; and you quote the promises made to them as securing you from fallibility: thus they are your fathers as well as of the Jews, and we may say to you as Christ said to the Jews, *Your fathers killed the prophets, &c.*; nay, we may say more to you, that your fathers killed the Messiah, and yet you still maintain their infallibility.

But while Christ exposed the fallibility of the church, he still supported her authority, by owning that *the Scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' seat*.

And this determines the limits of our submission to any authority; viz. to observe and do whatsoever they command us, (that is lawful,) let them be never so wicked, as wicked as these Scribes and Pharisees, whom in the same chapter Christ calls *serpents, a generation of vipers, and children of hell*: but to beware of their doctrine, not to think ourselves obliged to give the inward assent of our minds, and to believe all that they shall require of us as of faith; for this is the most desperate condition any mortal man can be in: and if our private judgment lead us to this, there is no other instance in the world wherein it can so fatally deceive us.

The next to this is the condition of you dissenters, who, instead of observing and doing whatsoever is commanded you, though it be lawful, will do nothing you are bidden; and for that very reason, because you are bidden; insomuch that what

you yourselves own to be lawful and indifferent, and that you might do it of your own head, you think it becomes sinful, merely because enjoined by your lawful superiors; for then it is an encroachment upon your Christian liberty: this is the spirit of contradiction, it is crossness for crossness sake; of which you would soon be sensible if it were in your own children. If one of them should say to you, I would have done what you bid me, but now will not, because you bid me.

Upon the whole, I allow the church to be the judge of faith, the only and supreme judge of it upon earth: as in all civil government there is a last resort, which is supreme, and unaccountable to man; yet there is an appeal to God, from whom both derive their authority. But the church of Rome will not suffer me to appeal from her to God, no not in my own mind. St. Peter owned the authority of the church of the Jews, and called their

Acts iv. 8. *sanhedrim the rulers of the people, the elders of*
 ver. 11. *Israel, and the builders of the church;* but yet he
 ver. 19. *said to them, Whether it be right in the sight of*
God to hearken unto you more than unto God,
judge ye. He spoke of the Messiah, the corner-
 stone whom they had rejected, and therefore he
 appealed from the church to God in this supreme
 and most fundamental point of faith.

Christ came with an evidence and authority then

John v. 34, *superior to that of the church; he said, I receive*
 37. *not testimony from man—the Father himself hath*
borne witness of me. And, indeed, to shew Christ
 by the church would be lighting a candle to see
 the sun.

The church is the interpreter of scripture, as the

judges are of the law; and they have authority so to interpret, and they judge authoritatively: yet they are but the ordinary dispensers of the law, to which an ordinary interpretation of the law is necessary. But the ultimate interpretation of the law is only in the legislative authority, according to the maxim, *Cujus est condere, ejus est et interpretari*; that is, "It belongs to the same power which enacts, "to interpret;" for the makers of the law best know their own meaning. Thus the church is the ordinary dispenser, and so far the interpreter of scripture; but the ultimate decision is in God, and we may still appeal to him; and must make use of our own private judgment for our understanding it, and governing our practice accordingly, in the great points of faith and worship.

XVI. Let us come to a test in this matter, and it is very short. Christ says to the people, *Search* John v. 59. *the scriptures—for they are they which testify of me—And how is it that ye do not discern this* Luke xii. 56, 57. *time?* (that is, of the coming of the Messiah,) *Yea, and why even of your own selves judge ye not what is right?* The Vulgar has it, *Hoc autem tempus quomodo non probatis?* Why do you not examine and prove whether this be the time or not, by the signs which the scriptures have testified of it? as you discern the weather by the natural signs which precede, the comparison our Saviour there uses; *Ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not* Matt. xvi. 3. *discern the signs of the times?* that is, when the Messiah should come; which are as plain as the other, that you need not go to any body to know it. *Quid autem et a vobis ipsis non judicatis?* You Luke xii. 57. may judge of it your own selves.

In answer to all which says authority, Nay, but
 John vii. 48, has the church determined it? *Have any of the
 49. rulers or Pharisees believed on him? But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed.* Are not they cursed who depart from the church, and will not believe her? who take upon themselves to know the law, and to interpret it contrary to the judgment of the church? they set up private judgment against authority! and I must leave it to every man's private judgment, to judge of all that I have said.

For this is the only general rule by which God will judge all men. It is a presumptuous argument to say that God is obliged to give every man an outward guide, when he has left the greatest part of the world without it. Was Abraham given as a guide to all the world, who was known only to a few neighbours? The law was given only to the Jews, and the Gentiles were not to be judged by it;

Rom. ii. 12. *For as many as sin without the law shall be judged without the law:* and not believing the gospel is a condemnation to those only to whom it is preached.

Mark xvi. *Go ye and preach—he that believeth not; that
 15, 16. is, what you preach.* So that rejecting the gospel was the crime, when it was offered with full evidence; for this was despising the goodness of God offered to us. But as for a general guide to man-

Ecclus. xvi. *kind, in the beginning God created man, and left
 14. him in the hand of his own counsel.* He set before
 Deut. xxx. *him life and death, blessing and cursing, for him
 19. to choose.* And God will bless or curse him according to what he has set before him, whether by revelation, or by his own natural reason only; and who is judge of this? None but God, who only knows

the sincerity of any man's intentions, and what endeavours he has used towards the right informing of his judgment. And where there is use for a guide, man has no other way to determine himself but by his private judgment.

XVII. Now to apply this as to our own immediate concerns at present. I suppose a man on his road to such a place, and coming where there are three or four different ways, he knows not which to choose; but he finds there several guides standing, who all pretend to be appointed guides of that road, and offer their service with equal assurance, each saying, that the way he points is the right, and none other. But the traveller has a chart or plan of the way in his hand, which all the guides allow to be just and right, and would have him walk by it; only one tells him, he may mistake his plan, therefore he desires he would give it up to him; and moreover that he should be blindfolded, because otherwise he might be disputing the way, which would retard his journey, and besides imply a distrust of his guide. But another guide tells him he should keep his plan in his hand, and he would give him leave to examine every step he led him by the plan, and then his own eyes should be judge whether he led him right or not; and he would not desire it should be left in his power to lead him over a precipice with his eyes shut.

The holy scriptures are the plan, and the church of Rome takes them from the people, (lest they dispute about it,) and requires them to trust absolutely and blindly to her guidance.

The church of England shews her commission to be a guide upon this road to heaven, derived by

succession from the apostles, with a competent, though not an infallible authority.

The dissenters have no commission nor succession to shew; they have thrust themselves as guides upon this road, of their own heads, not above a hundred and fifty years ago, in utter contempt and opposition to all the guides of God's appointment from the days of the apostles. And they have no authority at all, either to preach the word, or to sign and seal the covenant which God has made with man, in the holy sacraments of his institution, nor to bless in his name. This honour they have taken to themselves, which the apostle says, *no man can take to himself; but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*

Heb. v. 4.

And now, since God has appointed his guides to lead us with our eyes open, and not to take from us the use of our private judgment, that is, of our understanding, without which we could not be men; since this is all the security of which we are capable in this frail state, and to strain it higher would be to lose it all; let us not be taken with that presumptuous sophistry of infallibility, which hardened the Jews against their Messiah; unanswerable by the church of Rome, and hides repentance from her eyes!

I have given before a demonstration of the truth of the holy scriptures, and of Christianity, without touching upon the authority of the church, (only they come in for their share of the evidence, as they are part of mankind,) to shew that our faith stands not upon the precarious foot of the authority of any church, but upon such evidence as is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, and which

they cannot deny without throwing off all the certainty they can have in any facts whatsoever that have been done in the world. But if you argue from the authority of the church, you rivet every one in his own way; for you must suppose that another has as good an opinion of his church as you have of yours; and the Jew has moreover the same promises for his church, which the church of Rome alleges for her infallibility and perpetuity.

And the Jewish church was uncontestably in possession of all these promises for many ages together, because she was the true and only church of God upon the face of the earth, from Moses to Christ.

Therefore Christianity must have such a foundation to stand upon, as will not give equal (and greater) advantage to Judaism; else Christianity cannot be the truth, and her reformation was unjust against the church in possession; and we ought to return to her who was undoubtedly the mother-church, by the confession of all the Christians themselves: and she still complains, and asks the question, who was or ought to be judge betwixt her and her rebellious sons who broke off from her, and set up a new and opposite communion against her, though they were *a great company of her priests*, Acts vi. 7. xxi. 20. and myriads of her people? yet they were all misled, if our faith stands upon church authority.

This is a hard saying to many; and I will retract it when any one shall have the charity to shew me my error.

But I have not said this till I had first established the truth of Christianity upon another foundation, to which neither Jew nor Gentile can have any pretence; I have shewed the way to Christ by his own

glory, to which as nothing can add, so no other truth can imitate, nor authority give sanction to it, except
John v. 41. that only of his Father, for *he receiveth not honour from men.*

If any answer me, I desire him first to join with me in this prayer, that it would please God to strengthen those that are in the truth, and to convince those that are in error; towards which I have cast in my mite.

Quod faustum faxit Deus.

A
DISSERTATION

CONCERNING THE
USE AND AUTHORITY

OF
ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY,

*In a Letter to Mr. Samuel Parker, on his Abridgment of
Eusebius.*

DEAR SIR,

I AM very glad you have employed those good talents God has given you to the study of history, especially the ecclesiastical, which will serve best to the ends you propose, of promoting the interests of God's church, in an age where she is so far lost, as to be almost forgotten: and though we keep her name, she is yet unknown to most, what she truly is, or what it is that belongs to her. To retrieve which, the best method will be, to shew her in her primitive face; and then men will see how she has improved or degenerated. A picture allures more than description; and matter of fact beyond many arguments: discourses tell us of things, but history shews them to us.

But of all history, the ecclesiastical is the most beneficial, as much more as the concerns of the church are beyond that of the state, our souls above that of our bodies, and our eternal state more than the moment we have to stay in this world.

Secular history may make us statesmen and poli-

ticians; but the ecclesiastical will make us wise unto salvation.

There we see the rise and growth of heresies and schisms; and how these tares were sown, while the husbandman slept; how soon they were beat down while the watchmen were vigilant and zealous: but when they put on a sort of moderation, and would compound, how the weeds in a moment overspread the face of the vineyard; that it required even miracles sometimes to retrieve it!

There we see the beginning and encroachments of Erastianism, more fatal to the church than persecution; when court-bishops gave up the sacred *depositum*, committed to their charge, into the hands of kings and states for worldly considerations.

And there, and there only, I may say, is the decision of all controverted points in divinity, either as to doctrine or discipline: for every one of them must be determined by matter of fact. It is not refining, and criticisms, and our notions of things, but what that faith was which at first was delivered to the saints. This is matter of fact, and must be determined by evidence: and where any text of the New Testament is disputed, the best evidence is from those fathers of the church who lived in the apostolical age, and learned the faith from the mouths of the apostles themselves, such as St. Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, &c. These must know the best sense and meaning of the words delivered by the apostles; and next to them, they to whom they did deliver the same, and so on through the several ages of the church to this day.

And those doctrines, and that government of the church which has this evidence, must be the truth.

And they who refuse to be determined by this rule are justly to be suspected ; nay, they give witness against themselves, that they are departed from the truth.

Thus the church of Rome will not be concluded by the evidence, but by what they call the *authority of the church*: then they make this authority the same in all ages ; and so settle all upon the authority of the present church: then they vainly supposing themselves to be the whole world, or the catholic church, or the pope the head of it ; and consequently none to be true members of it, who own not his universal supremacy ; (who always were, and are at this day, more than ten parts to one against those churches which did or do own it ;) they take upon them to impose new articles of faith, as at Trent ; and assume the authority of the whole apostolical college to themselves.

But as the famous archbishop of Spalato, Marc. Anton. de Dom. said, the further he travelled upwards in antiquity, he still found more of the episcopal, and less of the papal authority, which he complained had, in his time, quite swallowed up the episcopal at Rome, and gives this as the reason, in his Concilium Profectionis, for his quitting his archbishopric, and other preferments in the church of Rome, and his coming over to the church of England, in the reign of our king James I, to seek for a more pure and primitive episcopacy : and this he did, as he tells himself, before he had ever read a protestant book, or conversed with any protestants ; but merely by his searching into antiquity.

The same method would baffle and silence our vile sectaries, of several sorts: for example, who can

read the history which you have epitomised, and doubt that episcopacy was the government of the church at that time, and before, all over the Christian world? And as to that childish rattle, which the presbyterians play with, of going to the etymology of the words ἐπίσκοπος, πρεσβύτερος, and διάκονος, it can have no more weight with any man of sense that reads Eusebius, than the word *imperator* being used sometimes for the general of an army could persuade any that read the Roman history to believe that there never was an emperor in Rome.

But as none can undertake this method except men of learning; so where they have managed the controversial points of divinity in this manner, such works have always been best received in the world, and have proved most effectual and unanswerable, as the celebrated Forbess of Corse, his *Instructiones Historico-Theologicæ*; the learned Cosin, bishop of Durham, his *Scholastical History of the Canon of the Holy Scripture*, and his *History of Transubstantiation*, which none of our adversaries of the church of Rome have attempted to answer: for plain matter of fact will not bend, or suffer us to dodge and fence with it, as we may do for ever about poor criticisms of words, and speculations of our own inventing.

They who read not ecclesiastical history, and the primitive fathers, must take their knowledge at second hand upon trust from others; which some think to supply with reading modern systems and courses of divinity, whereby they may have all at once, and be thereby likewise better enabled to understand the controversies of our own age.

But as these are grafted upon the ages foregoing, so the best method of seeing clearly into them, is to

examine upwards, and read downwards from the beginning: there we shall find many of those seemingly exalted and new notions set up by the various sects amongst us, to have been old exploded heresies condemned by the catholic church, and only new vamped by subtle enemies, crept in among us to divide and distract the ignorant and unstable.

It is a thing much to be lamented, that so many of our clergy, (though generally the most learned of any in any nation upon the earth,) some out of poverty, having no money to buy books, no, nor to provide bare necessaries, since the scandalous and sacrilegious impropriations made of their tithes; first by the pope, and then worse diverted by those who should have restored them; and others, out of laziness and avocations to secular affairs, content themselves with two or three Dutch or German systems of divinity, and some modern books upon the contests now afoot; whereby they can bear up something of discourse upon general topics, but know nothing to the bottom.

This disease had crept much even into the universities, not only while they were oppressed and purged during the usurpation of forty-one, by those who hated learning, because it made against them: but before that time the modern polemics, then bandied in Holland and here, of Calvinists, Arminians, Remonstrants, Anti-Remonstrants, &c. had taken up most of the studies of the young geniuses at the universities, to fit themselves for that war; whereby the learning of antiquity from the early fathers, and of ecclesiastical history, was in a great measure laid aside, and much impaired.

Which having been observed by that great arch-

bishop Laud, he, when chancellor of the university of Oxford, applied the proper remedy, and ordered the heads of the houses to direct the young students to the reading of antiquity, beginning at the first ages of the church, and so downwards; which has exceedingly raised the glory of that university, as of the other of Cambridge, which followed the same example; whence so many learned works have been produced in our kingdoms, of the true and solid antiquity, as have in a manner revived the first ages of the church, and given us noble editions of some of the greatest of the fathers; with hopes to see the same method gone through with the rest: the emulation of this has likewise gone into other countries, and improved learning every where.

Nay, even among the fanatics themselves, who, though they are filled with indignation to see this method pursued, and have wrote spiteful books against the fathers, to destroy their authority, yet are forced to come into them, and have taken pains to gather scraps out of them, which they wrest to favour their new opinions. Fain would they have antiquity on their side, if they could get it; and when it will not do, they rail at it, and run down fathers, councils, and ecclesiastical histories, all in a lump; and would have us take their light within for the only true interpreter of scripture! While at the same time they give us histories of their vile sects, their beginnings, progress, success, models, discipline, doctrine, &c. to preserve their memories to future ages, and to be a pattern for them: yet they will not allow this to the apostolical, and next succeeding ages; or that we can know them by the histories and writings of those times.

In which we find nothing of the papal supremacy, or presbyterian parity; but flagrant episcopacy every where in all churches: yet with this difference, that whereas our dissenters have this plea only left, to bawl and wrangle, as if our bishops took more upon them, and assumed greater authority than those primitive bishops did pretend to over their presbyters and people; the case is so far otherwise, that if our bishops should speak now in the language used by those early apostolical bishops, that rout would be ready to stone them, and cry out blasphemy! If they were told, that the bishop does immediately represent the person of Christ: that therefore as the apostles and disciples were obedient to Christ, so ought the presbyters, deacons, and laity, to be obedient to their bishop: that who kept not outward communion with his bishop, did forfeit the inward communion with Christ the head: that even prayers and sacraments out of the communion of the bishop were like the offerings of Korah, rebellion against the Lord: but “my soul for theirs who keep communion with their bishop;” for that he is the principle of unity in his church, and who is not in communion with him, is out of the unity of the catholic church: this would be called high-flying with a witness! yet this was the language of the holy Ignatius, and those primitive, and even apostolical times.

How far short of this is the style and the pretensions of our present bishops! yet we hear these sons of Korah, in his very words, (which they still retain, as well as his arguments,) telling their bishops, “Ye take too much upon you:” and the reason, “seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and

“ the Lord is among them ; wherefore then lift ye up
“ yourselves above the congregation of the Lord ? ”
They set up their own holiness (humble men of
heart !) against those governors set over them by
Christ ; and call their authority, a “ lording it over
“ the heritage of the Lord : ” their authority, which
is dwindled almost to a shadow, from that which
was left by the apostles to the bishops whom they
ordained ; and exercised by them with the joy and
consent of all good Christians for many ages ; and
all this upon the pretence that our bishops have en-
larged their authority above that of the first bishops !

But all this is cured by consulting the original
records and histories of the church, by which it will
appear how groundless and contemptible the preten-
sions are of both pope and presbyter, who are joined,
like Samson’s foxes, with firebrands, though they
look several ways, to ruin and depress the primitive
episcopacy. The one would have no bishop but
himself ; the other would have none at all : let
either of them see what footsteps they can find of
either of these schemes in your Eusebius, or in any
writer before his time.

The frame of the church was then in the full au-
thority of every bishop over his own flock, as well
presbyters as people, as he who must give an ac-
count to Christ, the chief Shepherd ; and in the
mutual agreement and correspondence of the bishops
among themselves, for the joint regimen of the whole
body, according to such canons and rules of eccle-
siastical discipline, as they settled among them-
selves ; which is exactly parallel to the government
in which God has disposed the world, the full and
independent authority of each particular government

in the several nations of the earth over their own subjects ; and what we call *the law of nations* as a rule among the several kings and states, for the preservation of the whole. And as God, in his infinite wisdom, has not thought it best for the world to set one universal monarch over it all ; but has consulted better for the peace and security of mankind, in many independent kings, who may balance one another, and be guarantees in the treaties of peace among themselves : so, as St. Cyprian has observed, “ Christ did therefore make the college of “ bishops numerous, that if one should prove heretical, or seek to devour the flock, the rest might “ mercifully interpose for the saving of it.” But if this power were lodged in any one universal bishop, then, as St. Gregory the Great wisely argues, “ if that universal bishop should fall, the whole universal church may fall with him.”

On the other hand, if every government were not entire and absolute within itself, they could not rule their own subjects, and so could not contribute towards the general peace of the world ; so that the presbyterian parity would unhinge all particular governments, and render the government of the world a mere chaos and a mob.

Now the state and history of the primitive church shews this by a stronger argument, that is, of fact, what was the government of the church, as established and left by the apostles ; for that is it which must, after all our reasonings, determine us : it is not what schemes and contrivances we may fancy, but what that government was which, *de facto*, the apostles left in the church ; and that must continue

till a greater, at least as great an authority shall alter it.

But some think that the apostles left no standing government in the church, but what might be altered by the church in after-ages, according to occasions and emergencies; and so episcopacy, presbytery, or any thing else, may come in—These make no great matter of the government of the church, so as (they cry) the doctrine be secured. But they consider not that the government was ordained to secure the doctrine: and no instance can be given, from Jeroboam downward, where the change of the government did not bring along with it a change of doctrine, as the apostle argues, Heb. vii. 12; *For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.* And as in temporal kingdoms there cannot be a change of government without a change also of the law, so is it in the kingdom of God upon earth, which is the church. Every small corporation is jealous of their government, and look upon any infraction upon that to be an invasion of their rights and liberties: the church alone, with us, is rendered precarious, and her government of no consequence! What stress God laid upon it may be seen in the business of Korah; and how near to heart it was laid in the primitive church, we see in the first invasions were made upon the episcopal authority. How was all the church in a flame, and the bishops every where concerned themselves, upon Novatus thrusting himself into the see of Cornelius, as being an infraction upon the rules and rights of the episcopal college! How did the great St. Cyprian cry out,

upon this occasion, that whoever invaded the see of another bishop was not *secundus, sed nullus*; no second bishop while the first was alive, and not synodically deposed, by the episcopal college, for heresy, or other crimes deserving it! For the right of every bishop in the earth is herein concerned; and consequently of the whole church, of her whole constitution as a society, that is, as a church: and it was not then thought a matter of so little moment, to suffer the pillar and ground of the truth to be shaken: for if the church goes, the truth which she supports goes with her, is impaired or improved with her; for Christ has founded it upon her, has built the faith *upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, himself the chief corner-stone*; and has promised to be with the apostles and their successors to the end of the world. Is it then a matter so indifferent who are their successors? who should be the centre of unity in every church? who should represent the person of Christ to us, and sign and seal his covenants with us, in his name, and by his commission? Can any invested with such an authority be put in and out at pleasure, at every body's pleasure, of kings, of states, nay, of the mob, be voted up and down by them?

While the church retained her primitive discipline, and preserved the bounds of the sanctuary free from popular and all lay usurpations, how was the faith made glorious, and the Christian zeal shone far and wide, to the disarming and conversion of her adversaries!

But in after-times, when her authority was lessened, swallowed up by the pope, and put all into his hands; preyed upon by the secular powers; divided

and torn asunder by rebellious and ambitious presbyters; and, lastly, trod under foot by the beasts of the people; how were the floodgates opened of all vile errors and heresies, which overspread the face of the church!

Let me name two examples, known to every body. The first is, when episcopacy was totally subdued among us, in the former successful revolution of forty-one, what a prodigious swarm of new-broached heresies and sects rose up all of a sudden, and overspread the face of the land! You will find the names of most of them in *Heresiography* and *Gangrena*, wrote in those times; they were about the number of those reckoned by Epiphanius, that is, sixty. No nation upon the earth, since Christianity, ever saw so dismal a sight at any one time!

But so soon as episcopacy was restored, with the banished king, an. 1660, these all (except three or four of chief name) instantly disappeared, as mists before the sun.

The second instance I shall give is the state of the church since the last revolution in 1688, wherein episcopacy was abolished in Scotland——*in ordine ad*—— And though the time was not come for going so far in England, (by a seasonable interposition of Providence,) yet all preparations were made for it: the power and management both in church and state were put into the hands of the enemies of episcopacy: its divine rights, or any right at all above the reach of an act of parliament, was taken away, and effectually disowned, by the act for lay-deprivations. Hence a schism arose in the church of England, (the first since the reformation,) and bishops and antibishops were set up.

Since which time the floodgates of heresy have been again set open. The Socinians, otherwise called Unitarians, so rampant, that besides the liberty of the press, and free owning of themselves, even in coffeehouses, without the least restraint, they proceeded so far as to lay the scheme for the open and public profession of their religion, to build and endow churches for themselves, &c. as we are told in the life of Thomas Firmin, their indefatigable agent.

Sir Robert Howard, a member of the privy council, and of great post in the government, owned in print what he called his *History of Religion*, which is a rank satire against all priesthood and churches whatsoever, and ridicules religion itself.

The books and pamphlets of those times upon these subjects are very voluminous: and from the countenance they received, (I wish I could not say even from some then in high station in the church,) they have filled this land, especially the young gentry, with principles of irreligion, of deism, (which is now the most prevalent, as it is the most cursed of sects,) and even of downright atheism.

And for the poorer and more ignorant sort of people, they, seeing the foundations thus shaken, have run over in shoals (taking advantage of the plenitude of the toleration) to the remainder of the sects left amongst us since the former revolution, (like so many of the Canaanites, to teach us the use of war,) besides new ones this rank soil has produced, as the Philadelphians, Bourignonists, Davisites, Masonians, (since extinguished,) and others; the Sweet-Singers, Antinomians, and others of the old ones revived. As those much ancients, which

we find in your Eusebius, lib. III. c. 26, that the bodies of the faithful shall not die; and, lib. VI. c. 37, that the soul does die with the body: the former set up lately by Asgil, the latter by Dr. Coward, and several others, who have wrote on the same side. And these old exploded heresies are now the chat of coffeehouses and taverns, as new and ingenious discoveries, and take with too many in an age prepared for such delusions: and many more went over to popery in the last than in the former reign.

From all this, that dreadful loose has proceeded of profaneness and open immoralities, which we now see before our eyes, in an excess would have been thought scandalous even in licentious times.

For what restraint can there be where there is no sense of religion? And what sense of an instituted and revealed religion, where its institutions are despised, and their authority with whom Christ has left the administration of them, and government of his church, is rendered precarious and voluble with every turn of state; nay, subject to the caprice of those who have itching ears, and heap up teachers to themselves? when tender conscience and moderation is pleaded on their behalf, who tear the body of Christ in pieces by various sects and schisms? when the spirit of zeal, the very life and soul of Christianity, the *παρρησία* of the gospel, is not only laid aside, but called *violence* and *high-flying*; and in the room thereof, such a Laodicean and Latitudinarian principle is set up, as knows not where it will stop; nor can indeed, till it has given up all revealed religion, which is inconsistent with

it? Towards which what pains have we seen taken, by some whom it least became, to advance, in opposition to it, what they call *natural religion*, (which will allow them latitude enough,) even to prefer a mother's obligation to suckle her own child, as being a natural duty, before any positive precept of revealed religion? which includes the belief of a Christ, or any faith in him; for that is nothing else but a positive precept of revealed religion. And then we cannot suppose that any of his institutions, prayers, sacraments, or any thing else, should be much stood upon; especially such as concern the regimen of his church, as a society distinct from, and independent of, any other upon earth: these must be easily dispensed with, when the author of what I have named above makes the command of an husband (who, by the way, is no natural relation, but of positive institution) sufficient to discharge his wife from that natural duty of giving suck to her child, which he makes "of more necessary and indispensable obligation (these are his words) than "any positive precept of revealed religion;" and directs parents and masters to take care, not to bring up their children and servants in what he calls the *jargon* (that is, the distinguishing principles) *of any party*: for these must give place at all times to politics, to keep up peace and quietness, though in the most manifest injustice; which any sort of principles, being stood to, might some time or other happen to disturb: and the quiet possession, though of wickedness, he makes preferable to any religion whatsoever; the consequences of which he extends not beyond this world; (for he has pub-

licly preached and printed the utter uncertainty, at least in his opinion, whether there be any hell;) therefore says, "And, for God's sake, what is religion good for, but to reform the manners and dispositions of men; to restrain human nature from violence and cruelty, from falsehood and treachery, from sedition and rebellion? Better it were there were no revealed religion, (that is, no Christ,) and that human nature were left to the conduct of its own principles and inclinations, which are much more mild and merciful, much more for the peace and happiness of human society, than to be acted by a religion that is continually supplanting government, and undermining the welfare of mankind," &c.

There is much more in the same author of the like sort: and I mention it here, to let our Latitudinarians see whither their principles do tend; this author being much admired by them, and the very top of them.

And I name this sect of the Latitudinarians, the last that I shall now speak of, as including all the rest, and all that indeed can be; at least, so far as to give way to them, and live well with them, for peace sake, though Korahites or Mahometans!

And I have pitched upon this remarkable person for an instance, he being the most concerned of any man in England in the late lay-deprivations, and breaches upon the episcopal authority.

And to make good what I have observed before, that infractions upon the government of the church have always been attended with corruptions, even in her doctrine.

And thence to infer how necessary it is to preserve the government of the church as Christ and the apostles left it.

Which what it is, and how zealously contended for in the primitive ages, the history you have abridged does evidently shew.

I might add a third instance, that of Holland, which, because it would not have episcopacy, is rendered the sink and asylum of all vile errors and heresies; from whence most of ours were sent to us, in the former as well as last revolution, which I have shewed elsewhere: and thus it has been, is, and will be, in all places, more or less, as Erastianism prevails, and episcopacy is depressed.

I have now but one word more, concerning the method of abridgments of history: they are of use to those who have read the histories at large, and to those who have not. To the former they serve as indexes, and revive them in their memories with little pains; and they encourage the latter to peruse the histories themselves; and to those who have not leisure or application to go through great works, they afford that knowledge which they would otherwise totally want.

As to your performance, your modesty prevents my saying any thing of it to yourself; and it will recommend itself to others nothing the more for an epistolary friend.

Instead of all which, I join heartily with you in beseeching God Almighty to give his blessing to it; to direct and prosper this and all your other labours, for his glory, and the good of his afflicted church; and to send more labourers into his har-

vest in this time of need ; that he may not yet remove our candlestick, for all that we have done ; but to heal the breaches of our Sion, and to hasten his kingdom. Amen.

The Conversion of St. Paul,

170 $\frac{2}{3}$.

A
SERMON

PREACHED AT CHESTER

AGAINST

MARRIAGES IN DIFFERENT COMMUNIONS.

P R E F A C E.

I. **THE** substance of the ensuing Discourse was delivered twelve years ago in a sermon at Chester; in which and the neighbouring county it is more common than elsewhere in England to match with dissenters, at least of one sort, from our church: and cross the water, in Ireland, the examples are many of English families, who by marrying with the natives have lost their nation as well as religion, and are turned mere Irishmen as well as papists.

Before I adventured to commit this to the press, I sent it to the most learned and judicious Mr. Dodwell, who returned the following letter^a, with his leave to make it public, and to go along with this; which will make this valuable, as being the occasion of shewing so learned a treatise to the world; and so necessary at this time to revive the true notion of the *peculium*, the holy seed, or city of God, which he has distinguished from the rest of the world by particular and most glorious privileges and promises in all ages of the world, from the first man born, even unto this day; and has wonderfully preserved, by his miraculous providences, amidst all her enemies; has assured her of a final victory over them, and eternal triumph and jubilee in heaven. This is an invincible argument for the truth of the gospel, when it is shewed, that the same *peculium* which Christ has set up in his church had been deduced through several economies, from the beginning of the world, and foretold by all the prophets from that time to the coming of the Messiah: and that fold of the sheep

^a This was a large discourse, and printed with the Sermon in the 8vo. edition; but not thought proper to be inserted here among a collection of this author's Works.

being finally separated from the goats, makes up the two eternal states of heaven and hell.

It is likewise the most forcible persuasive that can be to the restoring of a catholic communion and unity among all Christian churches, the members of this one body.

And also it is the truest light and rule whereby to govern the discipline of every particular church within herself, all with due respect to the preserving and supporting the true notion and prerogatives of the *peculium*.

Among which, this of marriage is a principle part, which has been forgotten and neglected amongst us and other communions, contrary to both their and our principles.

At first view, this attempt may seem as tending to the widening of our differences, and keeping us at greater distance.

But when duly considered, it will have the quite contrary effect: for they who are in earnest with their religion will by this sensible motive be brought to consider the more spiritual and eternal consequences of being within the true *peculium*; and will not, for small and indifferent things, make a schism in the church of which they are members, and for pride or peevishness throw themselves out of the fold of Christ's church, and set up another of their own contrivance.

And it will discover the hypocrisy of those loose professors who cannot abstain from marriage, for the same reasons which they think sufficient to divorce themselves from the church, which is the body of Christ, and to tear it in pieces by their schism.

It will beget a higher regard of religion; and it is to be hoped, when other arguments fail, that many may be persuaded to leave their schism, when they cannot otherwise compass a rich match, or one whom they love: and this may be supposed a guard which God has put for the security of his religion.

And as it may reduce many, so it will cement those that are in the *peculium* much more firmly, when they consider

by what a holy and strict tie they are united into one body under Christ the head.

Let me go on then a little in this preface to pave the way towards the ensuing Discourse.

There are two things to be considered in this matter of marriage into different communions: first, as to the inconvenience of it, the prejudice and hurt to families as well in their spiritual as temporal concerns; and, secondly, as to the lawfulness of it, which is the chief and great point, and mainly to be considered.

II. I will therefore only touch upon the first, because the reasons are obvious to any one, and the examples frequent, and daily complaints are heard, and the miserable inconveniences seen, felt, and understood.

It is a common theme, how little the promises in courtship, or contracts upon marriage, as to giving full liberty in religion, are regarded! And indeed they ought not to be regarded, and oblige only to repentance, as being unlawful oaths or promises. Can I covenant (or ought I to keep it) to suffer my wife to go on in what I am persuaded is a great sin, to continue all her life in an idolatrous worship, or in open and notorious schism, without so much as once interposing even my advice, or attempting to satisfy her scruples, or convince her reason? Will not the blood of her soul be required at my hand? Shall I be obliged to that hardness of heart towards her, which would be a sin in me towards a stranger? It is written, Lev. xix. 17, *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him*; or, as our margin reads it, *suffer sin for him*: that is, I shall answer for his sin if I do not reprove it. And can I tie myself up from this duty towards my wife? Is not this hating her in my heart? Is it not saying, Let me have your person or estate, and I care not what becomes of your soul? And shall not I answer for this to God? If I suffer sin upon her without rebuking of it, shall not I *suffer sin for her*?

Then again, what security can I have of her not tam-

pering with her children, if I be so hardhearted towards her, as to let her go freely (as I think) to the Devil? And whether I think truly or not, the kindness is the same; nay, and the sin too, in a great measure, because I go on in that which I think to be a sin and provocation to God, which is provoking of him to his face: I say, though I should be so insensible of my duty to God or man, as to suffer this in my wife without reproof, yet she may be better natured, and have not only more sense of God, but bowels for her children, than to see them perish (as she believes) both soul and body, for want of her advice and instruction. And if the husband be likewise religious, and make the same conscience of educating his children, then will some of them speak the language of Israel, and some the speech of Ashdod, or, which is worse, dissemble it for fear of offending, till they come to be their own masters; and then there is another family corrupted, and the infection gone to my grandchildren, and whole posterity.

III. There are agreements made in some of these marriages, that the father shall have the education of the sons in his religion, and the mother of the daughters in hers; or the father of the first child, the mother of the second, &c.

That is, I give up some of my children to what I think a false religion, and wherein I dare not venture my own soul, to have the privilege of bringing others of them up in the true religion: this is, if we are in earnest with religion, to damn one (as far as in us lies) to save another: a sad bargain for our children!

Especially considering that those I give up are certainly lost if I keep my engagement: and I have no assurance that faith will be kept with me, as to my share of my children; so that I deliver some of them to certain ruin, for the hazard of saving others.

Let us add to this the drawing into factions and parties among the children and servants, on account of the difference of religions practised in the family, and so breeding divisions and disturbance to the peace and good govern-

ment of the family; and wearing out by degrees that love and mutual confidence and trust there ought to be betwixt man and wife, while they are obliged to keep perpetual watch upon each other, for fear of their children and servants, for whose religion (I mean of the servants as well as children) the masters of families are chargeable before God; (how little soever that be now thought of; but men use the service of mankind as of beasts, without other consideration than feeding of their bodies, which they do for their own advantage;) I say, masters are answerable for the religion of their servants, as far as instruction goes, and the exercise of a just and equitable authority: and it being a truth even to a proverb, that men (especially children) are more drawn by example than precept, this greatest of temptations can never be wanting in that family where man and wife are of different communions.

There is but one thing that can be said to this, and it is common with those concerned; that is, that there are good and bad of all communions, and if men live justly and virtuously in any communion, they may go to heaven; therefore what need they trouble one another about this or that communion, so they be all Christian? That there is good sound doctrine taught in all, enough to save our souls, if we duly follow and practise it: that the things wherein they differ are not essential, but only matters of speculation, that may be this way or that way, and no great harm done: and if any be in such errors, they are but venial, and will not be imputed to honest well-meaning people, though in ignorance, since it is not malicious, but only out of weakness of judgment, &c.

These are the topics by which men of all communions amongst us do satisfy themselves, not to balk their fancy or interest in a good match when it comes in their way.

And I wish with all my heart that they did believe themselves, while they thus seek to impose upon themselves, to gratify a passion, whether of love, ambition, or covetousness.

For if the differences amongst us be so small, as not to

hinder marriage, much less good neighbourhood; how then come they, through the other end of the glass, to appear so mountainous as to be a sufficient ground for schism, for breaking the unity of the church, and tearing Christ's body in pieces? And not only for suffering persecution, even to death, ourselves; but they have been thought sufficient to dissolve our oaths of allegiance, to justify rebellion, and to fill the world with blood, slaughter, and desolation. Men have been ill looked upon, and lost their employments, for keeping company with malignants: and is there no offence in marrying with them? *Come out from among them, and touch not the unclean*, has been often pressed, and *separate yourselves*—which is the ground of all our separations: and after all, may we join with them in marriage, though in nothing else? Is marriage the least, the most inconsiderable of all ties? Is there less temptation in that than in common acquaintance and conversation?

Or, upon the whole, is this the truth, that our pretences to religion, tender consciences, &c. are all jest and banter, to carry on other designs, and inveigle the ignorant people to our side? And so we can keep them out of the opposite interest, not to touch there, we care not though they marry, with their religion, with the daughter of a strange God.

If the poor misled populace would consider duly of this, it might serve as an amulet to dissolve that charm with which they have been bewitched; and let them see that it was not the interest of religion, but their own, which induced their leaders to seduce them from their duty, and out of the bosom of the church, that they might usurp upon the state.

And to such of them as are truly conscientious (for no doubt such there are among all our dissenters) there is no medium, but either to return from their schism, or otherwise to abstain from marriages with those who are of a different communion.

And the same obligation lies upon others not to mix

with them. But if any will say that the differences betwixt our opposite communions are so small as not to hinder worldly marriage, we must certainly conclude, that they are not sufficient to dissolve that far more holy and spiritual marriage by which we are made members of the church, and so of Christ, the head of it: that they cannot be sufficient to warrant our forsaking the public assemblies of the church, and making a breach in her communion; upon which the heaviest curse is pronounced that ever came out of the mouth of God, Heb. x. 25, &c.

Let me add, that all those objections upon which our dissenters have broke off from the church are easily overcome when interest stands in the way. How frequently do they come to the holy sacrament, according to all the rites and ceremonies of the church of England, in obedience to the sacramental test, to qualify themselves for offices and employments in the government? And those of them that are rich, and have good settlements upon marriage, do marry by the Common Prayer, and the episcopal established clergy, to prevent any disputes in law that might arise for their marrying otherwise: and this is common with the best and most zealous of them.

Now I would beseech them to lay their hand upon their heart and consider, that if there be sin in these things, they ought not to comply with it upon any account. And if there be no sin, how will they justify their separation? Since all of us do agree that nothing less than sin can justify separation, because schism is a great sin allowed on all hands; and therefore nothing can excuse it, but where something that is as plainly and directly a sin as schism is, is required from us. And in that case, because no man must sin, our separation is no schism; but we are thrust out of communion for not committing of a sin: and therefore the schism lies at their door who impose the sin as a condition of their communion.

The inconveniences of these marriages has been touched upon; and from thence the unlawfulness has been inferred, as being a running ourselves into a temptation:

but the full proof must be from the holy scriptures; these must determine us; therefore let us inquire what we find said of it there.

And I will take my rise from a remarkable place, from whence my scruples first arose; and therefore I have chosen it for my text, that I may consider of it with company, and have the assistance of others to know whether I have rightly understood it or not: which if I have not, and be thereof convinced, I shall owe great thanks to any who shall undeceive me, and do promise a retractation: for there is nothing of this kind, none of these sort of marriages by which I have received any sort of personal prejudice, or any of my relations: so that I am, as to that, perfectly unprejudiced in this cause; and nothing has moved me to this undertaking, but merely the importance of the thing itself, and the mischiefs I have seen thereby accrue to many families; especially to one, which affects all.

IV. But before I enter upon this inquiry, let me add to that of marriages another custom too frequent amongst us, that is, to admit those of opposite communions to stand as godfathers or godmothers to children at their baptism. Some have no further consideration of them than as gossips to help a merrymaking at the christening feast; and therefore have respect only to their quality, that it be proportionable to those who invite them, and to whom they may return the like civility when they shall have occasion: and the common excuse is, that they engage only to take care that the child be instructed in the general rules of Christianity, wherein all our several sects and divisions do agree; and therefore that any of them are sufficiently qualified to undertake such a charge.

But I would desire such to consider,

I. That all our several sects do allege against our church's defection in some of the principles of Christianity; for otherwise they could not justify their separation from being a schism; since it is allowed on all hands that nothing less than a defection from some of the principles of

Christianity can justify a schism: therefore those that are in a schism cannot be good instructors in the principles of Christianity.

II. The charge given to godfathers and godmothers in our Office of Baptism is such as none can undertake and perform with a good conscience who are not of our communion.

1. To call upon the children, when of age sufficient, to hear sermons: by which the church cannot mean to carry them to conventicles of dissenters, to be instructed by their sermons: and dissenters ought not to carry children where they think it not lawful to go themselves.

2. To bring them to the bishop to be confirmed; which cannot be done with a good conscience by those who are anti-episcopal, nor by papists to a protestant bishop, as it is certainly intended in that charge.

III. A promise made in the presence of God, at a solemn office of the church, is in the nature of a vow, the performance of which will certainly be required.

IV. Hence there is a spiritual relation contracted, which carries with it an higher consideration than that of gossips or good neighbourhood: there is a great deal more in the word *godfather*: such is a father in things relating to God. In the church of Rome the spiritual relation is reckoned among the degrees of consanguinity wherein marriage is prohibited: but I urge it no further now than as utterly inconsistent with those of opposite communions.

Much more might be said upon this matter; but I thought thus much not impertinent to the subject we have in hand: to which therefore I now return; and take the text I have before mentioned.

EZRA X. 4.

Arise ; for this matter belongeth unto thee : we also will be with thee : be of good courage, and do it.

WHAT this matter was, appears from the context :

Ezra reproved the people of Israel for their having married with the idolatrous nations, contrary to the command of God : and they returned him this answer ; *We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land : yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God ; and let it be done according to the law. Arise ; for this matter belongeth unto thee : we also will be with thee : be of good courage, and do it.*

Let me here observe, in the first place, that all the nations then in the world, except the Jews, were idolaters : and therefore to forbid marriage with idolaters was the same to the Jews as to forbid marriage with any who were not of their communion : for they only then were the *peculium*, or holy seed, which had been deduced in their forefathers, all the way from Seth ; which is the reason that their genealogies are set down with so much exactness in Genesis, even before the flood ; and this seems to have been the chief purpose for which that history was intended.

I.
The prohibition on
account of
religion.
This the
reason
given.

And this will appear further, in that this prohibition to the Jews of marrying with the heathens was not on account of their nation, but religion : of which, the first evidence I offer you is this; that this is the reason given for this command almost in every place where this command is repeated in scripture.

Deut. vii. 3. *Thou shalt not make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods.*

1 Kings
xi. 2.

The Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. They turned away the heart of Solomon; and if the wisdom of Solomon was not proof against the witchcraft of this sin, what second man's presumption can be guiltless?

But that the hazard of being tempted to idolatry was the reason of God's prohibiting his people to match with the idolatrous nations is yet further evinced from this, that not only marriages with them was forbidden, but every thing else that might tend to the same end of tempting them to idolatry.

Exod. xxiii.
32.

Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will be surely a snare unto thee——

xxxiv. 15.

Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters

go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods.

Ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land ^{Numb. xxxiii. 52.} *from before you, and destroy all their pictures, &c.*

*But if ye will not drive them out, those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell; (that is, in tempting them to idolatry, as it is expressed, *They vex you with their* ^{xxv. 18.} *wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, &c.)* And God threatens, that if you suffer yourselves to be thus vexed or tempted by them, it shall come to pass, says God, *that I shall do unto you as I thought to do unto them.**

Whence we may learn, that God's hating these nations was upon account of their idolatry; and that for the same cause he will equally hate any other nation.

But further, to convince you that the prohibition to the Jews of marrying with heathens was not on account of their nation, but religion, we find the same reproof against the Jews, for marrying with idolaters of their own nation. Thus it is recorded of Jehoram, king of Judah: *He walked in the way* ^{2 Chron. xxi. 6.} *of the kings of Israel—for he had the daughter of Achab to wife.* And Jehoshaphat is reproofed for joining in affinity with the same Achab; and this reason is given, *Shouldest thou help the ungodly,* ^{xix. 2.} *and love them that hate the Lord?* And the like we find of his joining with Ahaziah, another idolatrous king of Israel: *Because thou hast joined thy-* ^{xx. 37.} *self with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, &c.*

But it may be objected, that this would infer it ^{11.} *obj. Of*

marrying with the ten tribes. was unlawful for the two tribes that stuck to Rehoboam to marry with the other ten tribes, because they never departed from the idolatry of Jeroboam, viz. the calves of Dan and Bethel, and therefore they were idolaters even to their captivity, and so would be included within the reason of the command against marrying with the heathens, viz. because they were idolaters.

Answer. To this I answer, that the reason is not the same, because there were always many in Israel who did not join in that idolatry: we are sure of the prophets, and have all possible presumption for many more; it cannot be supposed that the prophets had none such in their communion. We read of a college of prophets even at Bethel, besides several others; and in the lowest ebb that ever there was, we find seven thousand who bowed not to Baal.

2 Kings ii.
3.

1 Kings
xix. 18.

But as to those of the ten tribes who did join in idolatry, I cannot see but the command did reach them; when we see before our eyes the reproof of those who did marry with them.

Proselytes. But to put this matter out of dispute, that it was not on account of their nation, but religion, that marriages were forbidden with the heathen; we find that it was lawful to marry with those of the heathen nations who changed their religion, and became proselytes to the law of God; witness Ruth the Moabitess and Rachab, from whom our Saviour himself deduces his genealogy.

Matt. i. 5.

III.
Not limited
to the Canaanites.

And to this you may add, that this prohibition was not only upon some politic consideration, with reference to the seven cursed nations, whom the Jews were commanded to destroy, and therefore not to mix with them; for the case in Ezra was of their

marrying with the Babylonians, and other idolatrous nations during the seventy years captivity.

For it was the transgression of *those that had been carried away*: and the Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians, are reckoned (Ezra ix. 1.) among those whom the Jews had married, and from whom they were to be divorced, as being contrary to the law of God: and these were none of the seven cursed Deut. vii. 1. nations, whom the Jews were commanded to destroy, xx. 17. and not to make marriages with them.

Bellarmin says^a this must be only meant of those Egyptians, &c. who dwelt in the land of Canaan: but he gives no reason for it; that would have been troublesome, especially after having proved in the same chapter that the prohibition of marrying with idolaters was a moral command, *et ad omnes pertinet*, “and belongs to all of us,” and not only to the Jews; because, as he there proves, the cause was moral. Yet he said as much as the cause could bear; that is, that that was moral in the land of Canaan, which was not so a mile further, (as if God were offended with the ground, and not with the sin;) that this prohibition obliged all, and not only the Jews; and yet it obliged nobody, no not the Jews themselves out of Judæa; no, nor in Judæa, so the idolaters they married were only travellers or sojourners, and not dwellers in the land.

But I will not trouble you in chasing such wild supposes as Bellarmin often makes use of instead of answers, and that in this very case it must needs be confessed, that he objects better than he replies, and gets into a difficulty much easier than he comes out of it.

^a De Matrimon. lib. i. cap. 23.

But to shew you that the command, Deut. vii. 3, of not marrying with those seven nations which are mentioned, ver. 1, was not limited to them only, but extended even to other nations, where there was the same reason of idolatry; we find 1 Kings xi. 1, 2, where this command is repeated, and Solomon charged with the breach of it, there are reckoned, besides the daughter of Pharaoh an Egyptian, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, and Zidonians, who were not of these seven nations, and yet it is said, that these were *of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in unto them, neither shall they come in unto you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.* This shews plainly, that all idolatrous nations whatsoever, and not only the seven cursed nations, were included in this command. And Ezra lays the stress upon mingling of the holy seed; which must be with all who were not of the holy seed. Who can doubt but that Solomon's going after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites, was as great a sin as if he had gone after any idol of the seven cursed nations? It is said *that the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers; that is, strangers to their communion, not to their nation; because they might marry with proselytes of any other nation, unless we except the seven cursed nations, who were to be totally rooted out.*

If you will ask, why were these seven nations particularized more than other idolatrous nations?

You will find the reason Deut. xx. 16. God had determined these seven nations to destruction for

their extraordinary wickedness ; and commanded the Israelites to execute this sentence, and to possess their land, after having destroyed them root and branch, *saving nothing alive that breathed*. But God commands that they shall not do so to any other nations : for the Jews were not permitted to conquer where they pleased, but only such particular places as they were commanded. Their bounds are set Numb. xxxiv. They were in terms forbidden to meddle with the Edomites, (Deut. ii. 4, 5,) and Moabites, (ver. 9,) and Ammonites, (ver. 19,) and more, ver. 37.

This is a plain reason why those seven nations are particularly named, whose land God had given to the Israelites for an inheritance ; and therefore there was more danger of their being seduced by the inhabitants of the land where they lived, than by strangers ; but this does not exclude the danger that might come by strangers : so that though the inhabitants are particularly named, yet we see from several instances of the scripture, that other idolatrous nations are likewise included within the reason, and God's own meaning of that command, Deut. vii. 3.

But now let us consider how far all this matter Applied to us. will concern us at this day.

It is a maxim in the law, that where there is the same reason, the law shall be the same.

And there is none can deny but there is as much reason (at least) for Christians to avoid idolatry as the Jews.

But because there may be several sorts and species of idolatry, it will be useful for us to see what that particular sort of idolatry was into which the

Jews so often fell, and which was so severely prohibited and threatened by God, that we may beware of the like.

And because the Jews took their idolatry from the heathen, and were corrupted by them, let us see what theirs was.

IV.
What was
the idolatry
of the heathen.

1. As to the
object of
their worship.

It was, first, in supposing a great number of beings, both good and bad, whom they called *demons*, (the same that we mean by angels, *Angelos quos dicitis, ipsos et nos colimus*, St. August. in Psal. xcvi.) who were constituted as inferior gods under the one supreme Being; and each had his several province assigned to him, as the winds to Æolus, the sea to Neptune, &c. These they worshipped only as a sort of lesser gods, who stood in the middle betwixt the supreme God and us, and governed us by his permission and command, and were all of them accountable unto him: therefore they called them *dii medioximi*, that is, middling or inferior gods.

And of these they had tutelar gods for particular countries, cities, and families.

And when their heroes were dead, they ranged them among these sort of gods, and worshipped them.

But they worshipped all these in subordination to the one supreme God, and with relation to him; as St. Augustin^b does expressly tell us, *Hi omnes dii deæque sit unus Jupiter*, “The worship of all “these gods and goddesses were referred to the one “Jupiter;” whom they made supreme over all.

This was the polytheism of the Gentiles, in that

^b De Civit. Dei, lib. iv. c. 9.

they served and worshipped several gods; though they owned these no otherwise than as the ministers of the kingdom, or universal sovereignty of the one supreme being.

This was the idolatry forbidden in the first command.

The other branch of their idolatry, which is the subject of the second command, did respect the manner of their worship, which was by making images or pictures of their gods, and calling them by the names of the gods they represented; and having dedicated or consecrated them to this use, they believed them sacred; and that such images did secure to them the presence of the deity, who inhabited and exhibited his influence and virtues by means of his image. And their temples were full of ships, crutches, &c., dedicated by their votaries, in memory of mercies and deliverances they supposed they had received by praying before these images: and the worship they paid to these images was relative to that god whom they worshipped by the image.

2. As to the manner of their worship.

They did not think the image to be the god it represented: that was impossible; for nothing can be the image or picture of itself: and they had several images of different shapes and figures for the same god.

And though they called each image by the name of the god, as being consecrated to bear his name, yet they did not think that there was more than one god of a sort, as more than one Apollo, Venus, &c. though they had many images of them.

Another use the heathens set forth of their images was to serve as books and instruction to the unlearned who could not read; and to fix the intention

on the worship of their gods, that they might keep their minds and intention upon that god whom they saw represented in a visible form before their eyes. This is insisted upon by Maximus Tyrius, a heathen philosopher, who was tutor to Marcus Aurelius the emperor, in his 38th Dissertation upon this question, Whether images were to be dedicated to the gods? Where he tells us, that they did not make images as any likeness of the persons of their gods, because they had many, of different shapes, for the same god; and that they thought their images no more like the gods they represented, than the letters which spell their names, which are of different shapes, in the different characters of several languages: that it was impossible to make any image or representation of the person of the supreme, eternal, infinite, and invisible God; which, he says, they did not attempt, but only to express some of his perfections; as, by fire, they expressed his purity; by an image with many hands, his power; by one full of eyes, his providence and omniscience, &c.: for, he says, they know God to be more ancient than all things, greater than the worlds, and whatever any Christian can speak befitting the divine Majesty.

If any think that such wise philosophers as these could not be idolaters, but only the more ignorant people, who might take their images for real gods,

I hope they will allow Solomon to have been as wise as any of these philosophers; and that he had more advantages than they, being instructed in the law of God, and to whom God did vouchsafe to appear twice; who, before he fell into idolatry, had built the temple, and regulated the whole service

thereof, pursuant to the pattern and directions which he had received from the mouth of God himself.

This shews that a wise and a good man, and beloved of God, as Solomon was, may fall into idolatry. And Maimonides^c thinks that it was his wisdom that betrayed him, in trusting to relative worship, or such sort of distinctions; which should teach us not to be wiser than the law, or, as the apostle expresses it, *above what is written*.

Let me here add, that the Arian Christians were charged with idolatry by the orthodox, because they worshipped our Lord Christ, when they acknowledged him to be but a creature, though they advanced him far above all saints or angels, or whatever beings the heathens worshipped as their inferior gods: for God will have none to be worshipped but himself; this is an honour he will not give to any other.

There is indeed a distinction of divine and civil worship; the latter paid to kings, and our superiors among men; but no sort of religious or divine worship is to be given to any creature. If the distinction of a divine but relative worship would hold, it would excuse heathen idolatry; for it is impossible that they could worship those whom they called *dii medioximi* with the same worship they intended for those whom they acknowledged to be above them; or that Solomon could think that any of those dumb idols he worshipped was the supreme Being that made him and all the worlds; (no doubt he was master of as many distinctions as we can use in the case;) or that the Arians, thinking Christ to be a

^c Maimon. Mor. Nev.

creature, could give him the same worship, and in the same respect as they thought due to their and his Creator.

V.
Of the idol-
atry of the
Jews.

This account of the heathen idolatry was necessary to bring us to the true knowledge of that of the Jews: for this was the idolatry of which God did warn the Jews, and strictly prohibit to them,

First, *To have no other gods before him, or, with him*, as it is worded Exod. xx. 3, 23, or, *besides him*, as it should be rendered, Rom. i. 25, *παρὰ τὸν κτίσοντα*.

And when they did worship the gods of the nations round about, they did not do it in that sense, as if they had totally thrown off the Lord from being their God, and taken such a false God in his room, thereby quite changing the object of their worship; no, but they worshipped both together, in a superior and inferior degree, as the heathens did. And God calls this a *forsaking of him*, and *going a whoring after other gods*, because he had positively forbidden it, as having married his *peculium*, and calls himself *her Husband*; and therefore would have none other to share in their religion and devotion but himself alone: and the taking of others in, though in an inferior degree, was as when a woman takes another into her husband's bed; which is a forsaking of her husband, though she still lives with him, and a taking another in his place.

Isa. liv. 5.
Jer. xxxi.
32.

But that the Jews their forsaking of God was only in this adulterous sense, in worshipping of other gods jointly with him, and not a total discarding of the Lord from being their God at all, will evidently appear in this, that they worshipped both together; which could not be if they had quite

thrown off the one, and taken the other in his room. Thus we read, that the Jews did worship and swear Zeph. i. 5. by the Lord, and swear by Malcham.

That they feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations who carried them away. ^{2 Kings xvii. 33.}

And these nations worshipped every one their own gods; and yet *nihilominus*, (says the Vulg.) nevertheless *colebant Dominum*, “they worshipped “the Lord.”

So that here the idolatry of the Jews and of the heathen is made the same; as it must be, when the Jews fell into the heathen idolatry; which was, the worshipping of other gods with the true God.

Thus when *all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord*, to perform this matter was the chief care of Samuel; who spake unto them, saying, *If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroath from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Balaam and Ashtaroath, and served the Lord only.* ^{1 Sam. vii. 2, 3, 4.}

The notion was, as told before, that every nation had their tutelar gods, whom they were to worship; but still in subordination to the supreme God who was over all. Thus the king of Assyria sent to teach his people *the manner of the God of the land of Israel*; supposing that the Jews, like other nations, did worship a particular tutelar god of their own, who had care of their country, but not at all to exclude the common received notion of the whole world, that there was a supreme infinite Being or ^{2 Kings xvii. 26, 27.}

God above them all; only that he had committed the care of such and such particular countries and people to lesser gods under him: whence Homer makes Jupiter to chastise the other gods upon several occasions, and makes them all accountable unto him, and to petition and supplicate him.

- Now as to the other branch of idolatry, of worshipping God by images, there was nothing more positively prohibited to the Jews, as being a debasing and corrupting their notions of God, and wholly unworthy of him. Therefore God cautions them to
- Deut. iv. 12. remember, that when he spoke to them *out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words,* says he, *but saw no similitude;* (that's of whom he
- Verse 15. spoke;) *only ye heard a voice—Take therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or*
- Verse 23. *female, &c.* And he repeats it again, *Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee. For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.* And he cried by his prophets, saying,
- Jer. xliv. 4. *Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.* See with what detestation God speaks of this sin: and observe, that the command is not only against the worshipping of such images of God, but against the very making of them; as it is likewise worded in the second command, to cut off all room for distinctions.

And we cannot say that they were the images of any false gods that were here forbidden, unless we will say, that it was a false God who spoke to them in Horeb; whose voice they heard, but saw no manner of similitude of him: or that it was a false God who said, speaking of these images, *To whom* Isa. xl. 25. *then will ye liken me? saith the Holy One.*

It is certain, that the golden calf was made as a symbol or representation of the true God, to secure his presence among them, (after the manner they had seen in Egypt, in the like image of Osiris,) upon the supposed loss of Moses, by whom God had formerly spoken to them: *Make us gods to go before us*, said they; *for as for this Moses*, who Exodus xxxii. 1. *formerly went before us, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.* And when they dedicated this image, they proclaimed it a *feast unto the Lord*. Verse 5. And David said of this image, that by doing of this *they changed their glory into the similitude of an* Ps. cvi. 20. *ox that eateth grass.* He would not call a false god the glory of Israel! And the apostle speaks in the same phrase concerning the heathen idolaters, that though they *knew God*, even *his eternal power and Godhead*, yet they were idolaters in their manner Rom. i. 20, 21. of worshipping him by images; whereby, says he, *they changed the glory of the incorruptible God* Verse 23. *into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.* He would not call a false god the incorruptible God!

You see how every where the heathen and the Jewish idolatry do square together, for indeed they were the very same.

Acts vii. 41. And as the images of the heathen were called
 1 Cor. x. 7. *idols*, so is this of the golden calf; and the dedica-
 tion of it, though a *feast unto the Lord*, is called
idolatry.

It is brutal to think that they imagined that the calf which they made that day was the supreme Being itself, which had made them: no heathen ever thought so of any of their images. Will you take the notion of the Jews from themselves? Their learned Maimonides says, “^dThat the whole is more than a part, or that the sun is round, is not more evident than that there is but one God: and that no idolater does worship his idol in that sense as if there were no other God.” And he says, “that he cannot suppose that ever there was a man born, or ever will be born, who thinks that that figure which he makes of stone or wood, &c. did create the heaven and the earth, or governs them.” But he says, “they worship those images as things intermediate betwixt them and the supreme God.”

“It is certain” (says another famous Jew) “^ethat their intention was directed to God, as appears by the example of Abimelech, and the Ninevites.”

We must suppose the Jews to know best the idolatry of their own nation, for which they were so often and grievously punished; and likewise that of the heathen, which they had imitated.

2 Kings
 xvii. 41.

Let me fortify this by the authority of holy scripture. It is said, *that they feared the Lord, and served their graven images*; which shews that their images were not set up in opposition to God, but as subservient to his worship; and that they did not think them to be inconsistent.

^d Mor. Nev. part i. c. 36.

^e Cosri, part iv. §. 11. p. 284.

Thus God himself declares, *Every one of the* Ezek. xiv.
*house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth*⁷
in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and
setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the
stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and
cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning
me, &c. Here, though God calls the following of
 idols a separating of themselves from him, and being
estranged from him, as being a breach of God's Verse 5.
 express command, who will not be worshipped other-
 wise than as he has appointed; yet it was not such
 a total separation as to reject him quite from being
 their God, for they came to his prophets to inquire
 concerning him.

It is strange, after this, to hear some deny that Of Chris-
 tian idol-
 atry.
 there can be any idolatry among Christians; that
 is, that idolatry is not only inconsistent with the
 rules of Christianity, as all other sins are, but that
 idolatry does *ipso facto* make a man cease to be a
 Christian, and unchurches any church that is guilty
 of it; proceeding, I suppose, upon the foresaid sup-
 position, that it is a total and absolute forsaking of
 God, so that he is no longer our God; that God
 cannot be the God of an idolater.

But besides what is said before of the Arians,
 who were Christians, though heretics, and yet were
 charged with idolatry by the other Christians who
 were orthodox, St. Paul himself makes the suppo- 1 Cor. v. 11.
 sition of a brother, that is, a Christian, that is an
 idolater.

And the church of the Jews was a Christian
 church; they believed in Christ to come, from the
 first promise of Christ, Gen. iii. 15, immediately
 after the fall, to the end of the world; it is the same

Christian church, though under several dispensations. Therefore it is called the gospel that was preached to Abraham, to the Jews in the wilderness, and to the fathers.

Gal. iii. 8.
Heb. iv. 2.

And the church of the Jews was in their time the only visible church of Christ upon the earth; none other had the faith in Christ, or the Messiah to come, but only they.

Yet how often did they fall into idolatry! But as that was not a total forsaking of God, neither did he totally forsake them, though he punished them severely for it.

Neh. ix. 18,
19, 20.

Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations; yet thou (O God) in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night—Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them, &c.

Here they were universally involved in this idolatry, Aaron himself not excepted, high priest and all; yet were they not unchurched. And God gave them his good Spirit to instruct them and watch over them in many providences: God does not utterly forsake us for every even great sin that we commit. There is no perfection in this earth; our gold is mixed with dross, darkness is incorporated with our light, and idolatry itself sometimes passes undiscovered through our weak sense of religion, and that feeble notion which we have of God.

2 Kings ix.
6.

There are many examples of this in the history of the Old Testament. Jehu, the great reformer anointed by God for the purpose, and had his at-

testation that he had done well in fulfilling the will ^{2 Kings x.} of the Lord, and destroying the worship of Baal, ^{30.} and that he had great zeal for the Lord; and for ^{Verse 16.} this God did continue the crown in his family longer than in any of the kings of Israel; and yet Jehu ^{Verse 29.} departed not from the idolatry of the calves of Dan and Bethel.

Cyrus was an heathen idolater, and God styles him his *Christ*, or *Anointed*, his *Shepherd* to *build* ^{Isa. xlv. 1.} *his church*, and says, that he *raised him up in right-* ^{xliv. 28.} *eousness, and would direct all his ways.* ^{xlv. 13.}

Therefore we cannot doubt but many Christian idolaters may have the instruction of God's good Spirit, and may be men of devotion and great zeal, as Jehu was; and their labours may be profitable to the church: and yet this does not excuse their idolatry, nor make idolatry less a sin, or alter its nature, or take off from its punishment, or the precaution of God's law; but, on the other hand, it rather aggravates it so much the more, and makes Christian idolatry more inexcusable than the heathen or Jewish idolatry, and to be looked after more carefully.

But you may say to me, If idolatry be not incon- ^{Objection.} sistent with the protection of God, and even the instruction of his good Spirit, why should it be so unlawful to marry with idolaters?

I answer, The sin is not the less for the goodness ^{Answer.} of God; it is rather a greater aggravation of the sin.

But why then should it be a greater sin to marry ^{VIII.} with an idolater, than with a fornicator, drunkard, ^{Why marriage with idolaters forbidden more than with other sinners.} &c., who are named together with idolaters? ^{1 Cor.} ^{v. 11.}

Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest

against God? God has so ordained it; we must ask no more questions.

And yet there is an obvious reason for this; for if God should forbid marriages with every sinner, there would be no marriages.

Therefore God singles out the most *abominable sin which he hates*, as idolatry is superlatively called, Jer. xliv. 4; and God calls those *haters* of him who commit this sin, Exod. xx. 5, and lays a particular mark of his jealousy (which is his utmost indignation) upon that, above other sins. The jealousy of God is particularly applied to idolatry through the scripture, and he calls it *whoredom* and *adultery* against him. It is a bewitching sin, and the nature of fallen man is bent to this spiritual fornication; whence we see how universally it has prevailed, and blindly; for no man ever yet owned himself to be an idolater: it is hard to suppose a man to continue in it, if he knew it. And this is the ground of that which is the great and the strongest reason why marriages with idolaters were forbidden more than with other sinners, as drunkards, adulterers, &c. viz. the danger of the husband or wife tempting one another to this sin; it is the reason which God himself gives in the prohibition, *Ye shall not marry with them, for surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.*

And this they will do, as I said before, because all idolaters think themselves in the right, and therefore that they are under obligation to convert others, especially their husband or wife, their children and family.

But there is little danger that any husband or wife will tempt one another to adultery, drunken-

ness, &c.: it is rather seen that they endeavour to reclaim one another, and are troubled for one another's continuance in these sins.

But idolatry, that serpent sin, insinuates itself under the notion of the worship of God, and conforms itself not only to Christianity, but sometimes is transformed even into zeal, a zeal to the glory of God.

If, notwithstanding of all these precautions, any should yet think himself strong enough to grapple with this tentation, and that he could keep himself from idolatry, though he had an idolatrous wife;

I say to that man, that it would be just with God to suffer him to fall, for his presumption; that God suffered Solomon to fall by this, that no man after him should presume upon his own wisdom; that when we transgress a command of God in confidence of our own strength, we make ourselves wiser than God, and do renounce his protection; that if we could be assured of not falling into idolatry ourselves, yet how could we be assured that our children would not be influenced by their mother? her very example is an influence, and abates of the horror of the idolatry; of which we spoke in the preface.

All arguments in the world do confirm the reasonableness of this law of God, especially among Christians; who are forced to confess their guilt, while they can find no topic to clear them from idolatry, but by supposing that there can be no such thing under the gospel, or not in the same meaning as it was under the law. But,

Where will they find in the gospel another sort of idolatry set up different from that which was under the law? Or will they say that idolatry was

only a ceremony, or indifferent thing, which the coming of Christ rendered mild and harmless?

There is no possible reason to think that idolatry is not the same under the gospel which it was under the law, more than that there is another sort of adultery or murder under the gospel different from that which was under the law.

1 John iii.

15. Matt.

v. 28. Eph.

v. 5.

The gospel does indeed prohibit and distinguish these sins more minutely than the law had done; it brings murder to a rash word or a thought, searches out adultery in the eyes and in the heart, and applies idolatry even to covetousness.

But I hope I need not be required to prove that this is not a lessening of these sins, or altering of their nature.

The gospel, like the sun, discovers sin the more, and renders it more vile; and spares not idolatry more than adultery, murder, or any other wickedness, but pursues it to its fountain, and opens its smallest springs. Therefore all the advantage that idolatry will find under the gospel, is being set in a clearer light than it was under the law, and rendering Christian idolaters much more inexcusable than the Jewish, and from thence it must needs follow that those commands and precautions which were given under the law against idolatry, do oblige rather more strongly under the gospel: and as Christian idolatry is worse than the Jewish, so Christian or Jewish is worse than the heathen idolatry; as much more provoking as adultery is more than fornication. All mankind stand in that relation to their Creator, that idolatry in any is committing of fornication against him, as you have heard from the frequent style of scripture. But when people enter

into a particular covenant with God, when God marries himself to a people, and calls himself *their Husband*, as he did to the Jews, and much more to the Christian church, which he calls *his spouse, his wife, his dearly beloved, of one body, and flesh, and bones with him*; there fornication becomes adultery, and the adultery of a Christian church is more heinous than that of the Jewish, as much as the gospel is a stricter union to God than the law: and therefore where idolatry is forbidden in the law, it must be inferred more strongly as to those under the gospel.

But we are not in need of deductions from the Old Testament; the Gospel speaks not only plain, but passionately in the case.

Hear the apostle of the Gentiles, the unbelievers.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

VIII.
That text
2 Cor. vi.
14. explain-
ed.

I know some take this text in a larger sense; that is, of joining in church communion with idolaters, and that to be the meaning of being *unequally yoked*.

But the expression of *yoke-fellows* is more used in reference to marriage than of those who go to church together; and therefore the applying it to marriage is the more natural meaning, and the other

more precarious, at least borrowed, and the secondary meaning.

But I am not concerned against this exposition, for, as said before in the preface, if it will bear against joining in church communion with idolaters, it must conclude likewise as to marrying with them; for will not marriage make them yoke-fellows? Can you suppose that it was permitted to marry with them, and at the same time commanded to *come out from among them, and be separate?* Not to touch the unclean thing, and yet to make it *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh?* Is there no concord betwixt Christ and Belial, and shall they become both one? Hath the temple of God no agreement with idols? and shall I make an idol possessor of that temple, and marry a member of Christ to the daughter of a strange god?

Mal. ii. 11.

All this must be found rational, or, by this text, marrying with idolaters must be forbidden.

Bellarmin quotes St. Hierom in several places, proving this text to be meant of not marrying with infidels; “neither,” says he^f, “does Theophylact and “others go against this exposition, who generally “expound it of shunning commerce with infidels; “for if commerce be forbidden with infidels, certainly marriage, which is the greatest and most “dangerous commerce, is forbidden.” These are his words, and confirm most exactly the argument I have made: therefore give me leave to repeat St. Hierom’s application of this text, as he is quoted by Bellarmin.

“But now,” says St. Hierom, “many women,

^f De Matrimon. lib. i. c. 23.

“contemning the command of the apostle, are joined to Gentiles, and prostitute the temples of Christ to idols &c.”

And St. Cyprian shews his meaning of this text in *Serm. de Lapsis*, where, among other crimes of the faithful, he reckons that of marrying with infidels, and says that it is *prostituere Gentilibus membra Christi*, to “prostitute to the Gentiles the members of Christ.”

Bellarmin brings in St. Augustin likewise speaking against these marriages, though he doubted of the force of these texts as to that point; yet he concludes, *omnino conandum est*——“it is by all means to be endeavoured” that there be no such marriages; for, says he, why should men run themselves *in tantum discrimen ambiguitatis*, “into the so great hazard of a doubt?” For that in so doubtful a case the safer side is to be taken.

But Bellarmin blames St. Augustin even to the length of a sin, for so much as making the least doubt of this; and that it is a sin in any who shall doubt of it. *Si Augustino dubitare licuit, nec tamen nobis quoque licebit*; “If it was lawful for Augustin to doubt of this, yet it will not be lawful for us:” *Cum nos*——“When we,” says he, “have the determination of Paul explained by most interpreters, and besides many testimonies of councils and fathers which he had not seen; and, in fine, of all the divines who have wrote since the Master, and so we have the consent of the whole church with us in this matter.” These are his words; and he quotes several councils and fathers

* At nunc pleræque, contemnentes apostoli jussionem, junguntur Gentilibus, et templa Christi idolis prostituunt.

express upon this point, as can. 13 of the general council of Chalcedon, where marriages are forbidden with heretics, Jews, and pagans; and the like in several other councils: but the fourth council of Toledo goes further, and commands that those Jews who are married to Christians should become Christians, or be separated from their wives.

I will spare you his quotations out of the fathers, who are full upon this point, and made no doubt but that such marriages were unlawful; for I would not be tedious, and I suppose that will not be denied, from what has been already said. It is now time to come to some objections which lie against what I have said.

IX.
An answer
to the ob-
jection
from 1 Cor.
vii. 12.

The first is from 1 Cor. vii. 12, where it is said, *If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.* And so of the wife to her husband.

I answer, that this case is put of divorcing, and not of marrying.

In the first conversions to Christianity it must needs happen that many men might be converted, and not their wives, and *è converso*; and the question is, whether this was a sufficient cause of divorce? which is a very different case from that of marrying with such.

To shew you that this was the case, you may observe that the apostle directs his command here to the married; having from the beginning of the chapter given orders concerning the unmarried, and about the contracting of matrimony; at the 10th verse he begins with the married state—*Unto the married I command, &c.*

And then in the very words of the objection it is, *If a brother* (that is, a Christian) *hath a wife*; that is the case he puts, not to one that is about to marry; and the decision shews the same, *let him not put her away*; but he does not say, let him marry such a one.

But there is more in it than this; for to my apprehension it does imply the unlawfulness of marrying with such: and my reason is this, that if it was supposed lawful to marry with such, there could be no dispute about the lawfulness of living with them after they were married; for it is a less matter to hinder the contracting of a marriage than to dissolve it after it is contracted; and therefore if the Christians made it a doubt whether they ought not to divorce their wives for idolatry, it is past a doubt that they thought it unlawful to marry with such.

And there is yet a stronger argument in this case; for the apostle gives a latitude even for divorce, at least for parting, or suffering it, giving way to it; that is, if the unbelieving party shall be refractory: *But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart.* *A* ^{1 Cor. vii.} *brother or a sister is not under bondage in such* ^{15.} *cases*: from whence I argue, that what has power even to dissolve a marriage must operate more strongly against the contracting of such marriages.

But to make all this matter yet more plain.

The apostle in this chapter having given rules for the unmarried and for the married, comes at the end to speak of widows and second marriages: and though he would not absolutely dissolve marriages which were before made, upon the conversion of one of the parties; yet in case of a second marriage he ties them up, that it shall be *only in the Lord*; ^{1 Cor. vii.} ^{39.}

and Bellarmin acknowledges that these words *in the Lord* were meant of not marrying but with the faithful, and that almost all the interpreters of this place say the same; as Ambrose, Theodoret, Theophylact, Anselm, Sedulius, Thomas, Cajetan, and others; and besides, Tertullian in his second book *ad Uxorem*, and Hierom in his first book against Jovinianus.

The same was the sense of St. Ignatius^b, (who was cotemporary with the apostles, and disciple to St. John,) that Christians, both men and women, ought to marry with the consent of the bishop, that the marriage may be *in the Lord*.

Which command of the apostle (here quoted by St. Ignat.) was wrote in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: and the other above mentioned, which is more express and severe, of being unequally yoked, &c. in his Second Epistle to the same Corinthians; which we may suppose was occasioned by some of them having neglected or misunderstood his former command; and therefore this stands as his own comment and interpretation of what he meant by his expression of *being married in the Lord*.

Let me add, that the interpretation I have given of these texts is exactly agreeable with the sense of our first reformers; who in their Reformation of Ecclesiastical Laws, composed by thirty-two divines, civilians, &c. and confirmed by the authority first of king Henry VIII, and after of Edward VI, say thus, chap. viii. *de Matrimonio*:

“ⁱ Let not Christians marry with those that are

^b Πρέπει δὲ τοῖς γαμοῦσι καὶ ταῖς γαμούσαις, μετὰ γνώμης τοῦ ἐπισκόπου τὴν ἐνωσιν ποιῆσθαι, ἵνα ὁ γάμος ᾖ κατὰ Κύριον. Ep. ad Polycarp.

ⁱ Cum his qui non sunt Christiana fide, Christianis matrimo-

“ not of the Christian faith. For seeing it is reasonable that the children of Christians should be brought up in the Christian faith, it is much to be feared how that can be done, unless both parents be Christian: but if it so happen that one of those who are already married be of a different religion, let not such persons be rashly separated; but, according to the doctrine of St. Paul, let them live together so long as the person who is of a different religion shall be willing to cohabit.”

And this was no new doctrine of the reformation. The same sense of these words of St. Paul is given by Bellarmin^k.

He proves at large that the apostle did not permit the faithful to marry with infidels; but yet did allow that the marriage contracted with an infidel should not be dissolved by the conversion of one of the parties. And he gives instances of several things, as impotence, vows of continence, &c. which, if they be before the marriage, do make it void; but if

nium non instituetur. Nam cum liberos Christianos in fide Christiana par sit enutriri, magnus est metus, ne id, nisi utroque Christiano parente, ita esse non possit: sed si contingat ut eorum qui jam sunt conjuges diversa religio fuerit, non temere distrahentur hujusmodi personæ; sed juxta Pauli doctrinam, respectu Christianæ charitatis, tamdiu cohærebunt, quamdiu persona quæ aliena religione est, una vivere ac cohabitare sustinebit.

^k Apostolus non permittit fidelem cum infideli contrahere; sed matrimonium cum infideli contractum permittit, non dirimit per conversionem alterius conjugis; nam impedimenta dirimentia hoc proprium habent, ut dirimant, si ipsa præcedant, non dirimant si sequantur: impotentia enim coeundi, et votum solemne continentiae, et alia id genus, si præcedant matrimonium, illud ita impediunt, ut irritum reddant, si fiat; at si superveniant post matrimonium legitime contractum, illud dirimere nequaquam possunt. *De Matrimonio*, lib. i. c. 23. f.

they come after a lawful marriage, cannot dissolve it.

Object. But will not the decision of St. Paul in this case go against that of Ezra, who commanded to divorce the wives, and put away such as were born of them?

Ans. No not at all, for the cases are totally different: that in Ezra was *Jews* (which is *believers*) marrying with idolaters; (which voided the marriage from the beginning;) but that in St. Paul was *infidels* or idolaters marrying with one another, (of the lawfulness of which there is no manner of doubt,) and then afterwards one of the parties being converted and not the other, which shall not dissolve the marriage, unless the unbelieving will depart. But there is a further objection yet behind.

X.
Object. Of
the succe-
sion of Re-
hoboam.

Rehoboam was the son of an Ammonitess, yet he succeeded Solomon; and the like may be found of others.

Ans.
1 Kings xiv.
21.

To this it may be answered, that it does not appear but that she was a proselyte; and it is the more probable, because Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and so born before Solomon's old age, wherein he fell to idolatry; and it is not likely that before that time he would so notoriously offend the law of God as to marry an idolater.

2 Ans. But supposing that she was not a proselyte, then the dispute will lie betwixt this act of Solomon's and the reformation made by Ezra.

Ezra x. 3. This act of Solomon's is not said to be according to the law; and he fell by idolatrous wives: but Ezra's reformation was done *according to the law*, (given by Moses, Neh. x. 29, 30,) and *the council*

of these who trembled at the commandment of God,
Ezra x. 3.

And there was fierce wrath from God upon them Ezra x. 14.
for this matter, until they did reform it.

This was probably expressed in the extraordinary Verse 9.
rain that fell at that time.

And if we reckon the most miserable event of Rehoboam's reign, the division of the twelve tribes, not healed to this day, we shall find more presumptions of God's displeasure at his succession than we can make arguments from thence for settling it as a precedent. But what if Rehoboam's mother was not a proselyte? and what if the like may be said of several of the future successions of the kings of Israel?

It goes indeed against the grain to condemn whole generations of our forefathers, and not to be done without mighty cause, and the proof very clear.

But it hath been done by approved hands; and the providence of God may have great ends in it to correct human presumption; to teach us to make God's law our rule, and not to be misled by the errors of great men; to fix our hearts in God alone, and not to glory in men. There were many godly reformations made by the kings of Judah; but in none of them were the high places taken away: that was left as a mark of infirmity upon all reformation by human instruments; therefore no reformation was perfect but that only which was made by Christ himself: that after the captivity was more perfect than any before it, being built upon greater experience. And there are several instances in this same reformation after the captivity, of their going

XI.
Long traditions of our fathers no rule against scripture.

Instances in the high places.

against the customs of many ages of their predecessors : they made scripture their only rule, and minded not the prescription of their fathers that went contrary to it.

Booths.
Neh. viii.
14, 17.

It was written in the Law, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month. This command was neglected all along from the days of Joshua to the return from the captivity ; yet they reformed it, and God gave them very great gladness.

Sabbatical
year.

Another great instance is of every seventh, which was the sabbatical year, commanded Lev. xxv. 4, with such a particular judgment threatened to the neglect of it, Lev. xxvi. 34, 35, 43, as we see was executed, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21, with a respect to the length of time in which they had neglected it, that was seventy sabbatical years, which makes four hundred and ninety years before the captivity ; which reaches up to the time of Samuel : and yet we find not this neglect reprehended by him, or David, or Solomon, or any of the prophets, or amended in any of their reformatiions.

But the command against marrying of idolaters is frequently repeated, the breach of it more severely threatened, and often reprov'd by the prophets, though it began not so early, nor prevailed so universally, among the Jews as that of the booths ; and therefore we must imagine it of greater importance, and consequently the reformation of it the more necessary, even though its prescription had been older.

But this objection was not forgot by the reformers, though indeed they made it no objection, but rather urg'd their fathers' long continuance in this

sin as a stronger argument for their speedy reformation of it.

Ezra, in his confession of this sin, calls it their *great trespass*, for which all their evil was come Ezra ix. 13. upon them; and that since the days of their fathers Verse 7. they were in a *great trespass* unto that day, speaking still of the same sin.

And the seed of Israel separated themselves from Neh. ix. 2. *all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.*

This is the use they made of the example of their fathers, when it was against the law of God, and that in every case: thus they argued concerning the profanation of the sabbath; *Did not your fathers* xiii. 18. *thus, and did not God bring all this evil upon us?* And of the case we are upon, of idolatrous marriages, *Did not Solomon king of Israel fall by these things?*

The example of our fathers is not our rule, but the scripture is our rule, whereby to examine the practice of our fathers.

There are likewise several examples in the Christian church of marrying with idolaters; as Monica, Christians who have married heathens. the mother of St. Augustin, who was married to an heathen, and Clotildis, a Christian, married to Clodovit, king of France, who was an heathen.

But the same answer that has been given of the like marriages before the gospel will serve as to those since.

I will, to close this head, set you down Bellarmine's answer to all these examples, *De Matrimon.* lib. i. c. 23.

He says, " These examples are either of those

“ who were led only by the law of nature, before
“ there was any particular law against these mar-
“ riages; such were Jacob, Joseph, Esther, &c. or
“ of those who married heathen wives, but who had
“ been converted to the faith; for that was always
“ lawful; and thus Salmon married Rahab the har-
“ lot from Palestine, and Boaz married Ruth the
“ Moabite, &c. for they were converted to the
“ faith and Jewish religion, though otherwise they
“ were of the heathen, with whom it was not law-
“ ful for the Jews to marry; or of those who were
“ plainly reprov'd for their marrying with the hea-
“ then, contrary to the law; among these was Solo-
“ mon, who is reprov'd, 1 Kings xi, that he had
“ married Moabites, Ammonites, and Canaanites,
“ contrary to the law. And among these, those
“ Christians are now to be reckoned, who are
“ mightily reprehended by the holy fathers for this,
“ as we have above shew'd out of Cyprian, Ambrose,
“ and Hierom; or, lastly, of those whom ignorance,
“ and a custom that was introduced, may perhaps
“ excuse. And in this number it should seem that
“ St. Monica ought to be put, the mother of St. Au-
“ gustine; for in her time the custom had so pre-
“ vail'd, that it was thought no sin to marry with
“ the heathen, as Augustine witnesses in his book
“ of Faith and Works, chap. xix.

“ Therefore St. Monica was, it may be, excus'd
“ from the sin by her ignorance, and the custom of
“ her country; or certainly did purge that sin by
“ repentance and tears; nor ought she to dissolve
“ the marriage once contracted, because the custom
“ of the faithful people had not at that time reck-

“oned the difference of worship among those im-
“pediments which do dissolve marriage, as it did
“afterwards.”

These are Bellarmine’s words ; concerning which I will not stay to shew you how he dwindles the prohibition of God against these marriages (which he had at first confessed to be moral) into a mere custom of the church, thereby to make way for the pope’s dispensing power ; and, by the by, to excuse or alleviate the offence of some saint in this matter ; wherein he confesses all I would plead for, viz. that the example even of good men, or of a saint, does not invalidate the force of this prohibition of God. Saints may fall into great sins, but this lessens not the sin, only shews human frailty.

There is an objection which is urged by some, XII.
that this was only a political law among the Jews, Object.
and therefore not to oblige the other nations. That this was only a political law among the Jews.

First, This is *gratis dictum*, that it is only such a political law. Ans.

The contrary is plainly shewn from hence, that the reason against idolatry is not temporary, nor respecting this or that nation, but it is eternal, and therefore the law must be such, and not only political to a particular people.

But you may say, though the law against idol- At least as
atry be eternal, and even against marrying with to annul-
idolaters, yet to annul such marriages may be a po- ling such
litical law respecting the Jews only. marriages.

This is still a *may be*, and what may be, may not Ans.
be ; and the surer side is to make a hedge about the law, as the phrase of the Jews is ; rather to be stricter than too loose with the law of God.

But if the law against idolatry be eternal, then to

avoid the temptation of it must be as eternal; and that of marriage being the strongest temptation that is possible, and which proved too strong even for Solomon, it cannot pass as a political law respecting one nation only. It will be a confirmation of this, to shew that it is confessed by the doctors even of Rome: thus then we read in Bellarmine, *de Matrimonii Sacramento*, lib. i. c. 23,

¹ That the command against marrying with the Gentiles, Deut. vii, though it be judicial, and properly obliges only the Jews, yet it hath something moral in it, and belongs to all, if we look into the cause, for he gives a reason which is plainly moral; *For*, says he, *they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods*; and, 1 Kings xi, where the same command is repeated, God adds, *Surely they will turn away your heart after their gods*; and it is added in the same place,

¹ Sit igitur propositio prima, non licet fidelibus cum infidelibus aut etiam hæreticis matrimonia jungere; probatur primo ex verbo Dei, Deut. vii, Deus prohibuit populo suo matrimonia jungere cum Gentilibus. Et quamvis præceptum illud sit judiciale, et solos Judæos proprie obligaverit, tamen habet aliquid etiam *moralis, et ad omnes pertinet*, si causa inspiciatur. Nam causam reddit plane moralem, quæ etiam nunc locum habet; *Quia seducet*, inquit, *filium tuum, ne sequatur me, et ut magis serviat diis alienis*, &c. 3 Reg. xi, ubi idem præceptum repetitur, addit Deus, *certissime avertent corda vestra, ut sequamini deos alienos*. Et ibidem additur, Solomonem contra hoc præceptum egisse, et illi continuo accidissee quod Deus prædixerat; depravatus enim per uxores illas ethnicas, adoravit earum idola. Et sane si vir sapientissimus, et qui multis alias uxores habebat, per nova illa conjugia cum Gentilibus ita perverti potuit, ut singularum Deos coleret, quantum periculum iis imminet, qui unam tantum, eamque ethnicam, vel hæreticam ducunt, et qui nullo modo sunt cum Solomone in prudentia et sapientia comparandi?

that Solomon went against this command, and that befell him which God had foretold; for being seduced by his heathen wives, he worshipped their idols: and certainly if the wisest man, and who had many other wives, could be perverted by these new marriages with the Gentiles, so that he worshipped the gods of every one of them, how great danger does hang over their heads who marry only one wife, and she an heathen or an heretic, and who can no way be compared to Solomon in wisdom and prudence?

These are the words of Bellarmine; and he extends the moral and reason of this law, and consequently the obligation of it, not only to the marrying with heathens or idolaters, but to any that are out of the communion of the church, that is, to heretics: as he says in the beginning of the words before quoted, *Sit igitur propositio prima*—"Let this
" be the first proposition, that it is not lawful for
" the faithful to marry with infidels, or even with
" heretics." And here at the end he joins together heathens and heretics.

Nay, in the church of Rome they carry up this sin of marrying with an heretic to be a grand sacrilege; and consequently that it is a greater sin to marry such an one than to commit fornication with her: thus they say,

"^m To know an heretical wife with a matrimonial

^m Hæreticam uxorem cognoscendo uxorio affectu, per quem contrahitur matrimonium, gravius est peccatum quam cum eadem fornicari—Magis peccat cognoscendo illam uxorio affectu, et contrahendo cum illa, quam cognoscendo affectu fornicario; quia committit grande sacrilegium secundum omnes. *Martin. de Navarr. Consil. lib. iv. de Sponsal. Consil. v. §. 10.*

“affection, by which marriage is contracted, is a greater sin than to fornicate with her——He sins more grievously by knowing of her with a matrimonial affection, and by contracting with her, than by knowing of her with an affection as to a whore; because he commits a grand sacrilege, according to all.”

This is here delivered as the current doctrine of all the doctors in the church of Rome.

This sacrilege, I suppose, must be grounded upon the members of the church being members of Christ, and the making a member of Christ one with another who is not his member, which is a sacrilege of the highest nature; not only in robbing from God his temples or altars made of stone, his tithes, or other inanimate things dedicated to his service and worship, but in robbing and profaning his living temples, the very members of the body of Christ.

And upon supposition that the church of Rome were the only church of Christ upon earth, I do not see but that the consequence would be just.

Though, as to their distinction of making it a less sin to fornicate than to marry with those out of the church, the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 15, makes it the same sin of sacrilege to commit fornication with them, viz. that it is the making the members of Christ the members of an harlot; and applies to this case, ver. 16, what was said of marriage, that *two shall be one flesh*.

But then the difference betwixt a single act and an habitual living in this sin is to be considered. And indeed if such marriages be not lawful, they are a continued state of fornication: “For,” as it

is said in our Office of Matrimony, “ be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God’s word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful.”

I cannot imagine how the Roman catholics among us can satisfy their consciences upon these principles, in marrying so commonly as they do with us.

If they say the pope can dispense with it :

1. Has every one of them a dispensation for it ? I do not understand that it is so much as asked, or that they think they have any need of it, it is so common amongst us.

2. Can the pope dispense with sacrilege ? and such a sacrilege as tearing the members of Christ from his body ?

Or, 3, will they be content to lessen their sin, that they know their wives, and their wives know them, with an whoring and not a matrimonial affection ?

Or, lastly, will they confess, as the truth is, that their discipline is as loose as ours, when interest comes in the way ; and that they mind none of these things ?

But for the protestants, who own no dispensation against the law of God, this will lie harder upon them to marry out of their own communion ; and with those against whom they lay the charge of idolatry, and of the greatest schism ever was made in the Christian church, by confining it wholly to their own communion ; thereby excluding far the greatest part of the Christian world out of the pale of Christ’s church.

We all agree that marrying within the degrees

XIII.
Of marry-
ing within
the degrees
prohibited.

prohibited Lev. xviii. is unlawful; and that no power upon earth can dispense with it, because it is prohibited in God's law, as our act of parliament expresses it, 25 Hen. VIII. c. 22. And in the *Reform. Legum*, (before mentioned,) c. 3, it is said,

“ⁿ God established such a law in these degrees, Lev. xvii. and xx. chap. as obliges us and all our posterity; for these commands in these chapters were not peculiar to the people of the Jews, (as some do dream,) but have the same authority which our religion does attribute to the Ten Commandments, so that no human power can any way infringe it.”

Now if these commands, Lev. xviii. and xx. were not only judicial to the nation of the Jews, but of perpetual obligation to all Christians, what reason can be given why those other so oft repeated commands against marrying with idolaters should be thought only judicial to the Jews, and to have no effect upon Christians?

Is the one more moral than the other, and of more indispensable obligation? Yes, for that of the degrees prohibited must have been dispensed with in the beginning of the world, when there was a necessity of men marrying their sisters. And Abraham married his half sister before this law in Lev. xviii. was made. And by the answer that Tamar

ⁿ Deus in his gradibus certum jus posuit, Lev. xviii. et xx. cap. quo jure nos et omnem nostram posteritatem tenere necesse est; nec enim hæc illorum capitum præcepta veteris Israelitarum reipublicæ propria fuerunt (ut quidam somniant) sed idem autoritatis pondus habent quod religio nostra Decalogo tribuit, ut nulla potestas humana quicquam in illis ullo modo constituere possit.

made to her brother Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 13, it should seem that it was then dispensable.

Whereas this of marrying with idolaters never was dispensed with, but severely reprehended even in Solomon, and many others.

Besides, the reason of this law against this temptation to idolatry is perpetual, much more than that of the prohibited degrees, and alters not upon any variation of times or circumstances.

Lastly, it is anew prohibited to Christians in the New Testament, (as before has been shewed,) which the prohibited degrees are not: I mean not expressly; they are not particularly mentioned, though I grant they are implied. Therefore this law against marriage with idolaters is not only a judicial law to the Jews, but of perpetual obligation to all Christians.

Let me here remind you of what is said before, that all the worship of God in the world, except that of Jews, was then idolatrous: and therefore this command against marrying with idolaters was the same thing as against marrying out of their own communion; and so comes up full to our present case.

Having now thus far discussed this matter, let us go on to see how God has treated this sin in all ages; that the marks of his heavy displeasure against it may raise in us a just horror and caution, lest we fall under the like condemnation.

XIV.
Examples
of God's
judgments
against this
sin.

Instances of God's indignation against this sin.

This is the particular sin for which it is said that God sent the flood to destroy the whole earth, except eight persons; for it is told as the root from whence all their other great wickedness did flow,

1. Before
the flood.

Gen. vi. 2, 3, 4, 13. *That the sons of God did marry the daughters of men*; from which mixture there sprung a race of giants in all impiety, men mighty and of renown in violence, oppression, and licentiousness, with which they filled the earth.

These sons of God were the posterity of Seth. The others, called *the sons or daughters of men*, were the posterity of Cain.

Gen. iv. 11, 14. God cursed Cain for his sin, and I may say excommunicated him, as Cain said to God, *From thy face shall I be hid*: and it is said, that *Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod*. Now the land of Nod was not out of God's presence, any otherwise than as God's especial presence is with his church more than with others: there he is said to shew his face, from which now Cain was hid. He separated himself from his father, his family, and communion; and set up for himself, living by rapine and violence, which increased in his posterity to the flood.

He is thought to have first invented and set up the worship of God by images; perhaps for the same reason as Jeroboam set up his calves, lest the people's going to Jerusalem to worship should make them leave him, and return to their old master. And so with Cain, lest those that followed him should leave him, and return to worship with Adam, as they had done before.

But however that be, it is granted by all that he made a separation from Adam, and erected a new colony of his own: and that from that time forth the genealogy of Israel, or deduction of the city or church of God, was not carried from Cain, but from Seth; of whom and his posterity it is said that they

did call themselves by the name of the Lord; which Gen. iv. 26. implies their standing in a federal relation to God, he choosing them as his people or church, and they giving up their names to him as their God, calling themselves by his name, as we call ourselves Christians from our being admitted into the church of Christ by baptism. And as Christ calls himself the *Bridegroom* of his church, and her *his spouse*, so God called himself to his church of Israel, Isa. lxii. 5, and took the name of *her Husband*, Jer. iii. 20, xxxi. 32. The expression, *being called by a man's name*, or *having his name called upon them*, signifies marriage, Isa. iv. 1, and frequently elsewhere; which being the same expression here used of Seth and his posterity in relation to God, shews these to have been those sons of God who married the daughters of men. And then these daughters of men could be no other than the posterity of Cain; there being but these two posterities then in the world.

And here we see the world once destroyed for this sin.

Let us then go on, and look upon some examples of this sin in the new world after the flood.

God having set up his church in the family of ^{2.} Ishmael. Abraham, we find the first persecutor of it, (as he is called Gal. iv. 29,) Ishmael, was born of Hagar an ^{Gen xvi. 3.} Egyptian: and though he was of the *peculium* by his father, and so good a man as Abraham, yet so early did the influence of the mother appear, for *she* ^{xxi. 21.} took him a wife out of the land of Egypt, her own country: which no doubt helped him forward in his persecuting of Isaac and the true church.

By which example Abraham being warned; and to shew that this principle of not marrying out of

the *peculium* was known, and did prevail at that time, long before the law of Moses; which proves it to be either a part of the law of nature, or otherwise that it was given in command by God to the patriarchs; I say, to shew this, let us observe what care Abraham took as to the marriage of Isaac.

3. Isaac. Read the oath which he made his steward to swear; *I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, amongst whom I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.* He scrupled not the journey or distance of place.

4. Lot's daughters. But Lot took not the same care: he suffered some of his daughters to marry in Sodom; and they perished; the others were saved.

5. Esau. We find the same ingredient in the ruin of Esau; for his two wives were both Hittites; and this is said to be *a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.* And immediately after follows his rejection, and the blessing transferred to Jacob.

6. Jacob. Next we see the same care taken by Isaac in the marriage of Jacob, as before had been taken by Abraham in the marriage of Isaac. *And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.*

And to shew the benefit of having a wife of the same communion, as the danger of the contrary, this came from the earnest solicitation of Rebekah.

And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life Gen. xxvii.
because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a ^{46.}
wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which
are of the daughters of the land, what good shall
my life do me?

It is observable, that the two eldest sons of Abraham and Isaac, that is, Ishmael and Esau, who married out of the *peculium*, were rejected, and both turned persecutors of the church: and the two younger, who married within the *peculium*, were received in their stead, and the *peculium* was deduced in them and their posterity.

The miseries of Judah the son of Jacob, and his incest, proceeded from his marrying a Canaanitess, 7. Judah. Genesis xxxviii. who bore to him those cursed brethren, Er and Onan.

Let us now pass on to the time of Moses, who 8. Moses. Num. xii. seems himself to have fallen into this sin, for he married an Ethiopian, if she was not a proselyte. However, this did not excuse the sedition of Aaron and Miriam, upon that account; because Moses was their superior: and the power of reformation does not lie in the subjects. Of which hereafter.

The first blasphemer that was stoned by God's own express command is marked as a son of one of these marriages, his father an Egyptian, by a woman of Israel. 9. The first blasphemer. Lev. xxiv. 10.

When Israel was proof against all the enchantments of Baalim, they were ensnared into idolatry by mixing with the daughters of Moab. 10. Baal-peor. Num. xxv.

This is recorded as the sin for which God sold Israel into the hand of the king of Mesopotamia, in the time of the judges; that they married with the 11. The first of the captivities of Israel. Judg. iii. 6.

Canaanites, Hittites, &c., and served their gods. This was the first of their captivities.

12. Sam-
son.

In these times Samson is a famous instance, who married with the Philistines; whence ensued his dismal tragedy, and the captivity of his country.

13. Absa-
lom. 2 Sam.
iii. 3.

David married the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur, by whom he had Absalom, the disgrace and troubler of his reign.

14. Solo-
mon.
1 Kings xi.
1, 2.

The case of his son Solomon is notoriously known, who by marrying of strange wives fell into idolatry; and his example stands as a warning to all generations of men, not to trust themselves with that temptation, which proved too strong for the most wise of all mere mortals that ever were or shall be created: besides that he was greatly beloved of God, who sent by the hand of his prophet, to give him the name of *his beloved*. And God vouchsafed to appear twice unto him. He was chosen of all the men upon the earth to build the temple of God, and erect a new economy of the temple-service, superior to that of the tabernacle established by Moses. And he was named of God for this great work before he was born; and, in this, preferred to David his father; and had the promise of an everlasting kingdom given unto him, which is fulfilled in Christ our Lord, who sprang from him, and now sitteth upon the throne.

2 Sam. xii.
25. 1 Kings
xi. 9.

1 Chron.
xxii. 8, 9,
10.

And if such a man as this was suffered by the all-wise Providence to fall by this sin, it was meant (surely) to teach all others, that none should thereafter presume, upon their own strength or attainments, to taste of this forbidden fruit.

So that this example of Solomon stands *instar*

omnium, instead of a thousand : yet let us name a few more.

His fatal son Rehoboam, who lost ten of the twelve tribes, was the fruit of one of these marriages, for his mother was an Ammonitess. 15. Rehoboam. 1 Kings xiv. 14.

The marriage of Achab with Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, is reckoned as a greater sin than that of Jeroboam ; at least, as a great aggravation of it : and it is written, that she *stirred him up* to follow idols. 16. Achab. 1 Kings xvi. 31. ch. xxi. 25, 26.

Jehoram king of Judah married Achab's daughter, and walked in the ways of Achab : and God sent grievous plagues upon him, and a miserable death, according to the prophecy of Elijah, sent to him in writing. 17. Jehoram. 2 Chron. vi. 12.

And this iniquity of his went on to ruin his son Ahaziah, who also walked in the ways of the house of Achab, for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly : and after that her counsel had brought him to a violent end, she *destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah*, and usurped the kingdom to herself. 18. Ahaziah. 2 Chron. xxii. 3. 2 Chron. xxii. 9. Verse 10.

More particular examples of this sort might be produced, but let these suffice to bring us,

First, To the utter dispersion and loss of the ten tribes, even to this day : which is said to be chiefly for this sin of idolatry, to which they were tempted and ensnared by these marriages of their several kings. 19. Loss of the ten tribes. 1 Kings xvii.

Secondly, Of the great captivity of the two tribes ; the kingdom of Judah, for seventy years in Babylon, which was likewise for the same sin. 20. Of the kingdom of Judah.

And it is told before, in the 10th instance, that their first captivity was upon their first falling into

this sin after their entering into the possession of Canaan.

After the
captivity.

Let us 'now look into the time after their return from the captivity.

21. Ezra.
ix. 1, 2, 3.

And we find this same sin most sharply reprehended by Ezra the priest; not only as to their marriages with the seven cursed nations, which are all particularly named, Deut. vii. 1; but he names likewise the Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians, who were none of these nations. And the reason he gives reaches to all other people who were not of their communion, viz. *that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands*, that is, with any other who were not of the holy seed; which was not confined to their nation, but religion; because they were allowed to marry proselytes of other nations.

And let us observe the great zeal of Ezra against these marriages: *When, said he, I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sate down astonished, &c.* And he conceived a most passionate prayer, (to the end of that chapter,) attributing the judgments that had befallen them to this sin.

22. Nehemiah. xiii.
23.

After him, Nehemiah expressed no less indignation in the same case. And the nations he named, with whom the Israelites had married, were Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab, none of which were of the seven cursed nations: *And I contended with them*, (said he, that is, with his brethren of the captivity, who had married with these,) *and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall*

Verse 25,
&c.

not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?

The last instance I shall give is that of the great ^{23. Schism of the Samaritans.} schism of the Samaritans, which is not extinguished to this day; and took its rise from this last mentioned reformation of Nehemiah, who tells us in the very next words to those before quoted, that *one of* ^{Neh. xiii. 28.} *the sons of Jehoida, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore, says he, I chased him from me.* This ^{Joseph. Antiq. lib. xl. c. 8.} gave the occasion, about sixty years after the schism broke out, in the year of the world 3672, when Manasses brother to Jaddus the high priest refused to put away his strange wife, and was therefore driven from the sacrifice. His father-in-law Sanballat, then governor of Samaria, revolted from Darius, his lawful king, and obtained leave of Alexander, who had conquered him, to build a temple on mount Gerizim, of which he made Manasses the high priest. And all that adhered to their unlawful marriages resorted to this temple; and such other offenders as did not think themselves safe at Jerusalem.

Here was temple set up against temple, altar against altar, priest against priest; carried on by rebels, supported by the lay power of a conqueror,

and justified by Levites, who loved or feared their wives more than the church.

I have now given a short account of these marriages out of the *peculium*, and the consequences of them, from the beginning of the world, through the several states of the patriarchs and the Jews unto this day: for, as I said, this schism, now grown a sect of Samaritans, remains unto this day.

XV.
No exam-
ples of this
in the New
Testament.

In the history of the New Testament we find no examples of this sin: for besides that it reaches but a short way, the case was so positively ruled by the apostles, and these marriages forbidden to the first Christian churches, as has been shewed, that they degenerated not during the lives of the apostles, as the Israelites did not during the life of Joshua, but fell afterwards in the time of the Judges, who grew more careless, as shewed before in the tenth instance.

I will not now enter into the detail of the examples and evil consequences of this sin in after-ages of the church, of which catalogues might be produced; but these could not add to the authority of what is here brought out of the scriptures of God, from the beginning to the end: besides that it would swell this unnecessarily to too great a bulk.

XVI.
King
Charles I.

I say unnecessarily, as to us, who are more touched with examples at home than abroad: and we have one very near, which we cannot forget, because we feel it still, and tremble at the consequences which it may yet have upon us, that is, the marriage of that glorious martyr king Charles I. with one of a different communion, who, though he escaped the danger himself, yet his children did not.

But that is chiefly to be attributed to those rebels who drove them into foreign countries, and after (without a blush!) quarrelled with them for what they had learned there.

No doubt that queen had an influence upon her children, as all mothers must have, more or less; but she could not of herself have had those opportunities nor advantages in point of argument which that cursed rebellion gave her, carried on by those who called themselves *protestants*, and if continued to be justified, will make that name abhorrent to all men of sense and sobriety; if it once come to be taken for granted that that cause cannot be maintained but by rebellion, perjury, and lies.

Of the last of these that queen (as others) had a great share cast upon her by a sort of party-coloured saints, who had God in their mouth, the Devil in their heart, and the world in both their arms: and took that handle to wound the king through her sides.

I have no design to justify her, nor can I do it, knowing nothing of these transactions; but who can believe those against her, who branded king Charles I. and archbishop Laud for papists, who both died martyrs for our church? those who had so abandoned themselves to lying for *the truth*, (as they called it,) that they came almost to believe themselves at last those lies they had told so often? Insomuch, that whatever reports came from that quarter were justly to be suspected: and he that will make that his rule, to conclude all those stories to be lies which they tell, either to their own advantage, or of slander to the church or the king, merely upon that reason, because they tell them, will not

find himself mistaken once in twenty times: and the more confident and positive they are, then we are to suspect the most; for what cannot be proved must by these means be supported. Ought we then to believe those who have been so accustomed to make lies their refuge, and will stand it on to out-face the sun in that of which they dare not come to the proof, even themselves being judges?

I would do justice to all, and allow that the queen of king Charles had her failings, and perhaps might meddle too much in the government; and that her religion was a bias to her: these are inconveniences sufficient; but I would not give credit to all the slanderous stories raised of her by those who had ends to serve in doing it: there is a right to be done even to the dead, that we ourselves suffer not, when we can no longer defend ourselves.

But how much or little soever she was faulty, yet this we know, that her religion was made a handle to ruin the best of kings: and her influence upon their children abroad cannot but be suspected to have had its share in what followed.

Our nobility, &c.

This encouragement being given by the king's example, was imitated by others, chiefly of the nobility, who made no scruple to marry into families of a different communion, as sorted best with their interests: as it was in the time of Ezra, *the hands of the princes and rulers were chief in this trespass*. What inconveniences arose from this to their several families, I leave to themselves to reflect; to recount them would require a history like to that of sir Henry Spelman's of sacrilege.

Ezra ix. 2.

XVII.
These marriages are

But to come to an end, this will be granted me on all hands, that marrying into another communion

is, at least, a temptation. And then how can any, ^{unlawful, merely con-} without mocking of God, repeat the Lord's Prayer, ^{sidered as a} *Lead us not into temptation*, when, at the same time, ^{tentation.} even while the words are in his mouth, in the Office of Matrimony, he deliberately, wilfully, and avowedly throws himself, or exposes his child, to this great temptation?

How can any priest, with a good conscience, deliver over with his own hands one of his flock to another of a different communion? If they should fall thereby, would not their blood be required at his hand?

God says of such marriages, *Surely they will be a snare unto you*. O no, say we, that is too severe, perhaps they may not: as the serpent said to Eve, *Ye shall not surely die*. It is not surely so, be not afraid.

And after the many examples we have seen of the wisest of men, and greatly beloved of God, and the whole nation of the Jews, his own peculiar people, overthrown by this temptation, shall we run ourselves wilfully into it? Is it not a provoking of God, and a presumptuous sin? a trusting in our own strength, in contempt of the commands and threatenings of God?

Upon the whole, as it has been said in the preface, there is no reason that is sufficient to hinder communion but must also forbid marriage with such: and if the differences are so small as to allow of marriages, they cannot justify a breach of communion.

Because our marriage in the church, by which we are made members of Christ, of his outward visible body upon earth, and by that entitled to a

membership in his church triumphant for ever in heaven, which are not two churches or bodies of Christ, but the same body in different states; they are the same family, part in heaven, and part on earth: I say, this spiritual marriage is infinitely greater, and of more eternal consequence, than our worldly marriages, which are dissolved by death: and therefore whatever is a sufficient cause to break off our communion with any church, must much more forcibly conclude against our marrying in that communion.

Eph. iii. 15.

What is a lawful cause for breach of communion.

Let me add, that there is no cause justifiable for a member of any lawfully constituted church to separate from her communion, unless something that is sinful is required as a condition of her communion: and if it be sinful, or that we think it so, it must debar marriage as well as communion, for all the reasons before said.

XVIII.
In whom the power of reformation lies.

I am now come to the last point, which is, in whom lies the power of reforming this matter. And that is shewed in the words of my text, which I have chosen for that purpose, *Arise, for this matter belongeth unto thee*, said the people to Ezra the priest.

Ezra ix. 1.

Matters of religion are to be reformed by the church; and not only the people, but the princes are to make their application to the priests: thus said Ezra, *Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, &c.*

Num. xii.

It is told before how Aaron and Miriam made a sedition against Moses, because of his Ethiopian wife; but this is no objection, though Aaron was then high priest: because,

First, It does not appear but that she was a pro-

selyte, as said before; and it is most probable that she was so, going along with them in the wilderness, and witness to the many miracles there wrought.

Secondly, There ought no sedition to be raised against the supreme civil magistrate, though he had been guilty; no, not by the high priest himself: rebellion is never justifiable upon any pretence whatsoever.

Thirdly, Moses was supreme, as well in ecclesiasticals as temporals: it was he that consecrated Aaron, made the tabernacle, and ordered the whole economy of the worship of God, and gave the Law, from the mouth of God himself; which is the reason God gave against Aaron and Miriam for their mutiny against Moses. He was preferred to Aaron, even in the priesthood; as it is written, *Moses and Aaron among his priests*: though Aaron did exercise it, because the succession of the high priesthood was to descend in the family of Aaron, the elder brother; yet, during the life of Moses, he was supreme in all things, by the special appointment of God: but this was personal only to Moses, therefore his case is singular. But to return.

As the princes made their application to Ezra the priest, so did the people for the reformation of this error in their religion. But they did it not in any tumultuous manner, as if they would force a reformation; (God does countenance no mob-reformations;) but they addressed to Ezra with great humility, by the mouth of Shechaniah, and owned that the matter of reformation did belong unto him, and that they would obey him according to the law.

In the next place, Ezra used no outward force to compel them to this, but only the arms of a priest, that is, strong exhortation, and laying the law of God before them, which brought them to it.

Ezra ix. 3. It is said indeed, that Ezra did *pluck off the hair of his own head and of his beard*, in detestation of this sin of the people, and to move them the more to consider the heinousness of it.

Neh. xiii. 25. But it is said of Nehemiah the *tirshatha*, that is, the civil governor, that he *smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair*, for the same crime. The civil governor may inflict civil punishments; the power of the civil sword is in him; and he may exercise it in ecclesiastical causes, and over ecclesiastical persons: he is *custos utriusque tabulæ*, so far as the power of the civil sword reaches, but no further.

Thus each power, the ecclesiastical and the civil, stand in their several spheres, distinct and independent of each other.

The reformation of religion ought to move from the church; and the state to assist by their civil power to see the commandments of God and canons of the church conformable thereunto, put in due execution.

And for the people, they may petition and represent, but in all humble manner, not in mobs and in arms; and each man may reform himself: but they cannot, without the sin of rebellion, carry on a public reformation against the authority both of church and state; that would be to unhinge the world, and carry all back again to their first chaos.

We read in holy scripture of reformations made

by priests, as this of Ezra; and by civil governors, as that of Nehemiah, and several kings of Israel, approved of by God; but none such can be found of the people without them.

But what if the high priest himself, or bishop, who ought to reform, should fall into this or other sin or error in religion, what shall the people do in such a case?

XIX.
The case of
a bishop in
error.

Ans. They are his subjects, and cannot act judicially against him; no, nor tumultuously to make sedition against him, or defection from him, as Aaron and Miriam could not against Moses. But the people may seek for redress against such a bishop from the episcopal synod or college of the other bishops in the kingdom, who have a jurisdiction over any one bishop, even the archbishop himself, who is but their speaker or president of the council, and therefore may be changed by them, or deposed as any other bishop, and is subject, as any other, to the rules and orders of the court, though he be the mouth or speaker of it: for he is such by their authority, and none other.

But since we are upon this point, let us put the case to the utmost, and suppose a bishop fallen, not only into some smaller error, but into heresy, or fundamental errors; may the people then quit him, and separate from him even before synodical condemnation?

Of a bishop
in heresy.

Ans. 1. The heresy must not be what every man may so call, but what has been so defined by the church in the primitive times, as well as now: for we cannot make new things to be heresies, which were not so in the sense of the primitive church;

that would be to make a new faith and a new religion.

2. The fact must be notorious ; not only clamour and jealousies, and suspicion handed about by an insolent party, which may befall, and often has, the best men in the world ; and the credulous mob have swallowed all down greedily ; as archbishop Laud was hounded by them to death for being a papist, who was the most strenuous and learned opposer of popery that was in his age, and gave it the deepest wound, in his immortal work against Fisher the Jesuit. And though king Charles the martyr, at his death, recommended this book particularly, with others, to his children, to secure them against popery, and declared himself against it upon the scaffold, as the archbishop had done before ; yet all this is not sufficient, at this day, to secure their memories from the imputation of popery with a giddy multitude, managed by a factious party, who tell them stories ; making good herein (and in more than this) the character one gave of the humour of the English people, “ that they believe every thing “ they hear, and nothing that they see.”

Therefore I say, that if there be only a rumour of heresy against a bishop, though never so great, (for some make the greatest noise when there is least reason, because nothing but the noise will make it go down, and stop examining,) he ought to have liberty to defend himself, and the people must wait his condemnation by his proper judges, that is, a synod of other bishops.

But now, on the other hand, suppose a bishop shall not hide his heresy, but preach it openly and

barefaced in the church ; there, in that case, every man may and ought to quit him, and separate from him, even before his being condemned by the synod : for there is no room of doubt, or of proof, which is only for what a man denies. And he that is an heretic against the Christian faith, is not so much as a member of the Christian church ; and he who is not a member, can never be head or principle of unity in any church.

Thus it was decreed in the synod of Constantinople, can. 15 ; “ If any shall separate themselves
“ from communion with their superior, for any heresy condemned by the holy synods and fathers,
“ he publicly preaching the same heresy to the
“ people, and teaching it barefaced in the church ;
“ such shall not only be free from canonical censure
“ for separating themselves from communion with
“ the bishop so called, before synodical condemnation, but they shall be thought worthy of the honour that is due to the orthodox, because they
“ have not condemned a bishop, but a false bishop,
“ and a false teacher ; and have not divided the
“ unity of the church by schism, but have studiously endeavoured to preserve the church from
“ schisms and divisions.” In the same canon it is before decreed, that none shall separate from his bishop, upon “ any pretence of accusations against
“ him,” till it be determined by the synod ; and it makes all such guilty of schism : which comes up to the full of all that I have said.

But now (that nothing may be left that can be supposed) let us put the case, that most or all the bishops in any nation should publicly and barefaced in the church preach up heresies that have been

If most or all the bishops in a nation should publicly preach up heresy.

censured as such by the sense and doctrine of the primitive church ; I say, in that case, and pursuant to the canon before recited, as well as the reason of the thing, the people ought to separate from such bishops, even before synodical condemnation ; and seek for orthodox bishops from other nations, supposing that they have none such left of their own, who may consecrate others that are orthodox.

And what the people may do, what every private person may do, surely princes and governors may much more do : they may make use of the civil sword, which is committed to them, to expel such heretical bishops out of their dominions, even without synodical condemnation.

XX.
Our reformation justified.

And this, in one word, clears those objections which are brought against our reformation, because of the lay power that was employed in it, and brings the cause to this short issue.

First, Whether the pope has such an universal and unlimited supremacy, as he pretended to at the time of the reformation ? If not, (as it is now generally owned by the Roman Catholics themselves, and established by the decrees of the whole Gallican clergy, in council assembled, an. 1682,) then the separation of England from Rome, upon that only account, if there were no other, is justifiable ; as being only the asserting the rights of every national church, from the usurpation of the bishop of Rome.

Secondly, Whether the popish doctrines, upon which we differ with them, are heretical, according to the sense of the primitive church ? And this issue we will be concluded by ; to this we always desire to bring them : so that here the cause must end.

For as to their preaching these doctrines publicly in the church, owning of them barefaced, writing for them, and punishing those who denied them, of this there is no doubt.

Here then the dispute lies, upon the additional articles of Trent, which that council has made of faith.

Yet pretend not that they can add to the Creed; only by way of explaining the true sense and meaning of it. Whereas most of the Trent new articles are of things whereof there is no mention at all in the Creed, as purgatory, invocation of saints, &c.; and even the grand point of transubstantiation, which is explaining the manner of Christ's presence in the holy sacrament, which he has no where revealed, he has not told us at all the manner, whether by substantiation, or consubstantiation, or transubstantiation, or how otherwise; and therefore no man can define it, or ought to attempt it; at least so as to make our definitions to be articles of faith, and enforcing them with anathemas: but I say, besides all this, there is no mention of this holy sacrament itself in any of the three Creeds received by the catholic church, that is, the Apostolical, Nicene, or Athanasian Creeds; how then can the article of transubstantiation be an explication of any of these articles?

The sacraments are a public profession and exhibition; they are moreover seals and pledges of our faith in Christ crucified: but as the seal is no part of the writing to which it is affixed, so the seals of our faith are not the faith itself; and therefore are not mentioned in the Creed (which is a summary of our faith only) more than preaching,

prayers, and other means of grace, which God has appointed.

The church of Rome has no way to come off, but under the shelter of that article of “believing the “holy catholic church;” and then supposing herself to be that catholic church, that we must receive for faith whatsoever she proposes to us as such.

This, first, takes the main cause for granted, that she is the catholic church; and consequently that the major number of twenty, thirty, or sixty bishops, many of them pensioners to the pope, and some only nominal, (as one for archbishop of Upsal in Sweden, and another for Armagh in Ireland, to represent these two nations, both then broke off from Rome, and under other archbishops of their own,) were the whole catholic church: for there were no more bishops to compose several sessions of the council of Trent, as you may read in the history of it, in the second book.

Secondly, If this article of the catholic church were so understood, there needed no other article but this one, that is, to receive for faith whatever she told us as such.

But if the Creed was meant as a complete summary of all the articles of faith, then all the articles must be there.

And again, the Creed could be never closed or complete, if there was a reserve in it for new articles *in infinitum*.

Thirdly, All the Christian churches in the world have agreed in the Apostles’ Creed as a complete summary of their faith: and I take it to be impossible for them all to agree in the adding of any new article. This is an infallible assurance of our faith.

And if any particular church does it, (and Rome is but one particular church, and therefore cannot be the catholic, more than a part can be the whole,) it must be detected by the rest, as the new articles of Trent have been.

And we receive not our faith from Rome alone, but as that church (however eminent more than others) stands in the list with all other Christian churches, as a joint witness with them of their common faith as it was once delivered to the saints by the holy apostles; therefore the word *apostolical* is joined with that of *catholic*, in the article of the church.

But this being a controversy by itself, different from our present subject, though not altogether foreign to it in its consequences, I will now enter no further into it; only I thought it not inconvenient to have said thus much, because I foresaw it might be objected.

Therefore recommending what I have here offered to your serious consideration, let us not forget the regard which God has to our bodies, which he calls *his temple*, and threatens to destroy those who shall defile it; and commands us to offer up our bodies as a reasonable sacrifice unto him. Therefore they are not our own, and we cannot dispose of them in marriage after our own lusts and fancy, or otherwise than according to his law; which let us beseech him that he would open our eyes to understand, and would write it in our hearts.

“ O Almighty Lord and everlasting God, vouch-
“ safe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify, and go-
“ vern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of
“ thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments,

“ that through thy most mighty protection, both
“ here and ever, we may be preserved in body and
“ soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
“ Amen.”

A
LETTER
FROM
MR. LESLIE TO HIS FRIEND,
AGAINST

ALTERATIONS OR ADDITIONS TO THE LITURGY OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

SIR,

I HAVE read the little pamphlet, and see no grounds for a breach upon that account; the utmost they can amount to is probable opinions. The author says, p. 10, "that the church of Rome does not make mixing water with the wine necessary;" and will he go further? He leans more to tradition than to the scripture. Let him read bishop Usher's Answer to Molouco the Jesuit, chap. ii, concerning tradition, and there he will find abundant concurrent testimonies of the fathers, p. 25, &c., that nothing is to be received as faith, or Christian doctrine, but what is written in the holy scriptures, which are so perfect a rule, that nothing is to be added to them; which if any do, let him fear that woe denounced against such. When the testimonies from the fathers are answered, then it will be time (and not before) to enter into the dispute of these unscriptural notions of mixing water with the wine, of prayers for the dead, for turning the bread and wine into the body and blood, &c.: till then, it will be sufficient to say, that they are not written in

scripture, which cautions us not to be wise above what is written. In short, we must first find our rule of faith, before we apply any thing to it, or it to any thing: if it be scripture, we know where we are; but if it be tradition, we launch into an ocean which has neither shore nor bottom, nor we any compass to steer by, where we must be driven *about with every wind of doctrine*. Our Lord severely reprehended the traditions of the elders, as making the word of God of none effect. And are our traditions better than theirs? for theirs had the authority of their church. I am grieved that so many of the handful shew inclinations to popery: I am told that about a dozen are gone off lately, and others send their children to be educated in popish, and even in Jesuit, seminaries. The Lord rebuke the spirit that is gone out amongst us, to sow divisions in the church for little singularities, of which some men are fond. But *quod sine periculo nascitur non sine periculo definitur*, there is but *unum necessarium*; but when we let our imaginations work, we find thousands. This is plainly the case reprehended, Col. ii. 18. Let me know “if this of “the reasons for restoring some prayers” is all the dispute which now makes new divisions amongst us, even, as I am told, to the abstaining from each other’s communion? Is schism then become so indifferent a thing? which we used to say nothing could excuse, but the avoiding what was directly sinful by the word of God. Different churches have different usages, and we may like one better than another; but shall we make a schism for this? Our Saviour, who left us a form of prayer, left no form for the consecration of the elements, though he did

for baptism. In the collect just before the consecration, with us, we pray that we may eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood, which we are there about to receive: but this does not satisfy some; they would have it more express, as in Edward the Sixth's liturgy, "that they may be unto us the body " and blood;" as in the Reasons, p. 22. And where is the difference? Ours seem more express, "To " eat the body, and drink the blood;" which, no doubt, is meant spiritually, according to John vi. 63. But they would have some wonderful transmutation in the very elements, which has introduced transubstantiation. Whither are we running? *Mark those who cause divisions among you, and avoid them.* The Reasons, p. 26, speaks not favourably of the canon of the mass for omitting this prayer, but he thinks it may be included in an after prayer he mentions, as he owns it is in our liturgy: but still he would have it more express. Is not the church of Rome herself superstitious enough for him? But there is no stay in this art of charming about *the letter* that *killeth*, instead of *the spirit* which *giveth life*. These are not *able ministers of the new testament*, 2 Cor. iii. 6. But *we know that the law is spiritual*, Rom. vii. 14; and that even in this sacrament *the flesh profiteth nothing*. But the words that Christ spoke *are spirit*, and therein consists the *life* of all outward institutions, and not in the *opus operatum* of the letter, and a form of words of human invention, to work like charms. These indeed have *a form of godliness*, but know not *the power thereof*: *from such turn away*: who, if they can find a form different from ours in some old book, rejoice as for a discovery, and fear not to make a

schism in the church to introduce some old form which they have espoused, and thereby become *famous in the congregation, men of renown*. I am much grieved for this new schism, and upon such very slender grounds; and it is plain whither all tends: therefore I have spoke the more earnestly upon it, according as it now appears to me; when I know more of it, I will say more.

*Mr. Leslie's Letter to Mr. B—— about the
New Separation.*

DEAR SIR,

LAST post brought me yours of the 20th of last month, wherein you desire to know my sentiments concerning the New Separation, and say that others desire it too; as you likewise told me in yours of January 27th, which I delayed answering, in daily expectation of those books you told me were printed there upon the subject, and that I should soon have them; but they are not yet come to my hands, and can say nothing to them till I see them.

But that I may not go upon misinformations, which easily may be supposed at this distance, and by verbal accounts of travellers, I have three preliminaries to be informed in, before we come to the merits of the cause.

1. Who made the separation? Did they separate from you, because you put water in your wine? or did you separate from them, because they did not?

2. By what authority was this done?

3. I would be glad to know the steps and measures were taken, and the reasonable methods pursued in the determination of the synod, or major number of the episcopal college.

When I have a certain and clear information of these three facts, I shall be able to give my sentiments the better concerning the points in dispute.

You say in yours of January 27, "I can never discommend any priest for reviving an old primitive practice." What! of his own head, without

any authority! and where such practice was not necessary! Suppose any priest now should revive the love-feasts, and holy kiss at the sacrament, and administer it after supper, and not in the morning: and give it to infants, and even to the dead, which was forbidden in the third council of Carthage, can. 6; would you not discommend such a priest? Or if there were twenty of them, and two or three bishops at the head of them, who should break communion with all who should not conform to them? You say, in the same place, that the late dean Hicks told you, that "when he came to Barking church, he found the use of mixing water with the wine, which was mixed in the vestry, not at the altar, to be the usage there, which he found had been the practice of Dr. Layfield in that church, and he continued the same manner of celebration. But this made no noise," say you. No, nor had it made any, if it had been continued to this day, as they used it, that is, not to make it any term of communion, or force it upon others, as a thing necessary and indispensable, and to refuse communion with all other churches (which were all in the nation) who did celebrate the communion according to the established liturgy of the national church. There is a case like this, which you will find in Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. cap. 24. While the contest about the day of Easter was agitated, St. Polycarp, disciple of St. John the apostle, who kept it according to the Jewish computation, came to Rome, where it was kept on the day now used in the western church, and discoursed the matter with pope Anicetus, and though neither could convince the other, yet they broke not communion, or friend-

ship, but in honour to Polycarp, Anicetus gave him the consecrating of the sacrament when he received with him in his own church in Rome, and they parted in Christian peace and charity: but when furious Victor came in, he would give no quarter, but fell to excommunication presently; and he would communicate with none who kept not his day, nor communicate with them who kept their own: whence a terrible schism arose between the eastern and western churches. And, as you will see, chap. 23, both sides pleaded apostolical tradition: so that this was not so very certain a rule, even in those early days.

Old primitive practice, merely of itself alone, has no weight.

I have named some practices of Christ himself, and of the apostles, which have been taken away and altered in all Christian churches. And if any bishop or priest should revive them, and make a separation upon that account, he would be censured as a schismatic by the discipline of all the churches in the world. And discipline itself is at least as ancient, and more necessary for the being of a church, than any of those alterations, which are carried on upon the ruin of all discipline.

I know some sound members of the church of England, who always use unleavened bread at the sacrament, where it may be had, but without noise, or making separation for it. And it has more foundation in the passover and institution of the sacrament, than mixing water with the wine, of which there is not the least tittle or tendency in any of the gospels, or other parts of the New Testament, where the institution is particularly recited, as 1 Cor. xi.

23, &c. I mention this the rather, because I had a letter from a principal man of the separation, letting me know that they have other things to press or "wish for," but that at present "no more is insisted upon." So that we know not where it will end, and we may have next day unleavened bread, and the literal washing one another's feet, and we know not what, imposed upon us as articles of faith, and necessary to salvation; for we used to say, that less could not justify a schism: *sed quantum mutati ab illis!* Now every priest may make a schism, and tear the body of Christ in pieces, and gather to himself or partners separate congregations, opposite to the communion of the church, for every primitive usage he can hear of, that has been left off (and he ought in modesty to suppose) for wise and good reasons; at least to suspend his schism till these are fairly and thoroughly canvassed.

The aggressor is answerable for the bloodshed on both sides; but he exhorts whom he attacks to be sure not to strike again, because it is the second blow makes the quarrel: and it must and shall be his way, for he hates contention, and speaks much of peace, union, Christian love, and charity; and therefore tells us, in great condescension, "these are the utmost lengths for an accommodation we can offer, and which we earnestly desire may be received." And what are these lengths? The first is, to disown that liturgy to which they themselves have given their unfeigned assent and consent, and which has been established by all the authority, spiritual and temporal, in the nation, and never to use it more, especially by no means the communion service; and that we have had no true sacrament (ex-

cept at Barking) since the reformation, for want of water; and this by way of bulwark against popery; which, though it uses water, yet thinks it not necessary. But we have got beyond it: but you say, "neither do they think episcopacy necessary." First, that is nothing to the water. In the next place, none but Jesuits could tell you so; for indeed they were enemies to episcopacy *ab origine*, and their general opposed it with his whole force at the council of Trent, from whose arguments our protestant Jesuits, the Presbyterians, have borrowed their artillery against it; but even that council was too many for them, and forced the pope (whose battles they fought) to retreat with the best face he could: and at this day (as well as formerly) the right of the episcopate is asserted strongly in France against the encroachments of the pope's supremacy, and his present constitution. Therefore trust not the Jesuits' representation even of popery, far less of morality, (provincial letters,) or common Christianity.

Old Mr. Edw. Stephens, whom you mention, I knew right well, he came often to me, and I took him to be an honest well-meaning man, of great zeal, but weak judgment; some thought him mad. He was enamoured of primitive usage, right or wrong; a flea leapt out of that dust-basket, which he died pursuing. He had heard that long ago, in times of hot persecution, some zealous Christians communicated every day, not being sure of their lives so long: and when they wandered through woods and deserts, they could carry a bit of bread in their pocket, when they could not carry wine, they thought better to communicate in one kind, than to lose both: a weak and superstitious thought,

no doubt: but the imitation of it in times of peace and quietness, and to make the practice of it necessary and universal then, was most ridiculous and wicked; yet this was the ground of the daily and solitary masses enjoined on the priest, and of taking the cup from the laity for ever. But the daily communion struck Mr. Stephens's fancy. O what a brave thing it would be to have Christians so prepared, so abstracted from the world, and disentangled from the cares of it, as well as from all sin and wickedness, to be always in such a disposition and frame of mind as is required in those who come to the holy sacrament, with their loins girt and their lamps trimmed ready to meet the Bridegroom, at least in the sacrament, every day!

I remember I once discoursed this point with him at large: we were near the Royal Exchange, into which I could look out of my chamber window, and I took my topic from thence, seeing the merchants running with great earnestness into the coffeehouses and taverns to drive their bargains; and I asked him whether he thought that such, generally speaking, did not need some time of recollection and trimming the lamp, before they approached the holy sacrament. And if daily communion to such would not bring them into a contempt, at least a less regard than was fitting of that holy ordinance, instead of increasing their esteem and reverence for it; while they found themselves obliged to run from the sacrament to the tavern, or from the tavern to the sacrament; or otherwise neglect their vocation and providing for their families; which St. Paul pronounceth to be *denying the faith, and worse than infidelity*, 1 Tim. v. 8. And men may run into su-

perstition upon the sacrament, as the Jews did upon the sabbath; and as Christ said of the sabbath, so may it be said of the sacrament, that *it was made for man, and not man for it*, and therefore that it does not interfere with common offices of life.

You say in yours of Jan. 27, "About thirty
"years my good and pious friend, Mr. Edw. Ste-
"phens, set up the practice of primitive and daily
"celebration of the Christian sacrifice, with an
"emendation of the liturgy; this he did without
"setting up a principle of separation from the
"church, but only to mend and reform it; and for
"this he had the encouragement and prayers of all
"good men, and a very comfortable congregation of
"communicants;" that is, he set up a separate con-
gregation, but not upon a principle of separation.
He is the father of the new separation, and they
have not the honour to have first mended and re-
formed the liturgy. And his fate may be a warn-
ing to them; for he had a mind to be of some church
or communion besides his own, and for that purpose
he went to the chaplains of a popish ambassador in
London, (I think it was of Portugal,) and desired to
be admitted into the communion of Rome, but they
would not receive him; unless he would come up to
their terms, they would not go down to his, think-
ing him an enthusiast: he told me again with joy,
when a Grecian archbishop of Philippopoli was in
England, that he would try to be admitted by him
into the communion of the Greek church, which
struck his fancy mightily, but, as he told me after-
wards, he tried it, but was refused there too. And
so lived a seeker. And his disciples of the new se-
paration are seeking still; for, as I told you, they

have more things to wish for, and we may expect will come out in the commanding strain, if what they have let go already meet with success, for there is no stop in the art of imagination; nor can it want fuel while there is an old book in the world that tells of ancient usages, and that we think ourselves obliged to revive them all, as necessary to salvation; and then they are articles of faith, and it is a sin not to observe them: and nothing can justify making a schism in the church, but to avoid something that is sinful.

This has been a received principle among us, and warrants our separation from Rome, and condemns that of the dissenters from us.

But this justifiable cause of separation must be proved to be a sin by clear and undoubted authority, which the scriptures only are. The fathers pretended not to it, but wrote as we do, proving what they said from scripture, and some of the greatest of them have wrote retractations of their own works. 2dly, We are not sure of their works; for many spurious books have been put out in their names, and passed as theirs for a long time; many of which have been detected by the labours of the learned in these later ages, but we cannot say we are sure that none remain, for they were found out, not all at once, but by degrees, and from time to time, and by intervening accidents. 3dly, The court of the index at Rome assumes openly the authority to mend and reform them, to put out and put in what they think fit, to make them speak the modern language, and are so little ashamed of it, that they have printed volumes of these their emendations of the fathers; but we may be sure not all. Therefore no word,

sentence, or paragraph, in any of the fathers which have passed through these hucksters' hands can be depended upon as certain and indubitable, or can admit of any argument beyond that of probability; which is too weak to build articles of faith upon, or determine the necessities to salvation. If you say, this takes away the whole use of the fathers. No, there are many excellent and instructive things in them; but we must refer them, as they referred themselves, to the holy scriptures, as the only sure rule. Thus St. Paul referred himself, *Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ*, and no further does he desire. May we not then say the same to the fathers? and of all primitive usages not warranted in scripture? The communicating infants in the eucharist is a very ancient usage, and is continued to this day in the Greek church, as you may see in the letter of Jeremy, patriarch of Constantinople, to the Lutherans, in Dupin's History of the Seventeenth Century. It is likewise used in the church of the Abyssines and Cophtits of Egypt. And baptizing for the dead has more countenance in scripture (1 Cor. xv. 29,) than praying or making offerings for them, has longer tradition, and more primitive usage. And you may gratify some fanciful friend of the separation with letting him know that in the Greek church they always warm the water they mix with the wine, (and some say they mix it not till after the consecration;) and is not this curious? for the water that is mixed with the blood in an human body is certainly warm, and more nearly represents what came out of our Saviour's side. This may be kept *in petto*, and *wished for*, till a proper time arise to make it the ground of a new separation.

Blessed God! whither do we wander? having forsaken the *fountain of living water*, the *sure word of God*, for the rule of our faith, we have *hewed out to ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water*, Jer. ii. 13, the customs and traditions of men. How rightly has St. Augustin judged, as if he had been speaking of our present case, and to the new separation, to bring them back again to the holy scriptures, “*Quicquid inde audieritis hoc vobis bene sapiat: quicquid extra est, respuite, ne erretis in nebula,*” (De Pastor. cap. 11.) And he says, (Ep. 42,) that the divine scripture is not silent concerning those things which belong to true religion; “*quæ tamen pertinent ad veram religionem quærendam et tenendam, divina scriptura non tacuit.*” He was speaking of the tradition which has descended down to us, of actions done in former times, but he excepts that from being the rule as to religion, but the scripture only, and wholly, because it is not silent in any thing pertaining to that, but contains plainly all things relating to faith and morals; “*In iis quæ aperte in scriptura posita sunt, inveniuntur illa omnia quæ continent fidem moresque vivendi.*” (De Doctrin. Christian. lib. ii. cap. 9.) O! that it should be needful to quote any thing of this sort against a new separation of some among ourselves, who have so long suffered and fought with us for the holy scriptures, the church, and the constitution, against the traditions of Rome, the fund of all their errors, as they were to the Jews, and made the scriptures of none effect.

To understand which rightly, we must take care to distinguish betwixt the *letter* and the *spirit*, as the scripture itself does distinguish; and that as

well in the New Testament as the Old, as St. Paul says, 2 Cor. iii. 6, *God hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life*: the outward institutions are the letter, which were ordained to point out to us the inward and spiritual things represented and exhibited by them, as letters express in writing what they signify. But when men stuck to the *opus operatum* of performing the letter of the outward institutions, and trusted in that, then were they dung and abominations before God, Mal. ii. 3, and hateful to him, Isai. i. 14. Nay, he denied that he had commanded them, Jer. vii. 22. And when the Jews took literally what Christ said concerning their eating his flesh and drinking his blood, he set them right, and instructed them in the true meaning of it, saying, *It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*, John vi. 63. But there never was so fatal a sticking to the letter as in this case, that the *hostia*, or bread of the sacrament, should be worshipped, not as a symbol, figure, or representation of Christ, but as very God itself, and the worship to terminate in it, and not to be relative or referring to any thing else. This is a *knowing Christ still after the flesh*, which the apostle reproves, 2 Cor. v. 16. What then is our dispute about mixing a little water with the wine, which has nothing of the spirit, nor even of the letter of the gospel to warrant it? But against both, some will follow an ancient usage, (of which we cannot be sure for the reasons before,) which might have been in some places, and not in others, as it is at this day, and

yet no breach of communion upon that account, which never happened till this new separation. But the truth, the reality, is in the spirit, which is only figured in the outward institutions: for *the law is spiritual, and he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God*, Rom. ii. 28, 29, and chap. vii. 14; and baptism is called a *figure, not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God*, 1 Pet. iii. 21. not the outward baptism or washing of the skin, but the inward baptism or cleansing of the heart, of which the outward baptism is but a figure. And as the outward sacraments of the law and the gospel, circumcision and baptism, were not instituted for their own sake, but to denote the inward and spiritual meaning of them; and as the sacrifices under the law were only typical of the only true and real sacrifice of Christ, which alone could take away sin: so the institution of the Lord's supper was figurative too of the spiritual nourishment of our souls by faith in what he did and suffered for us in the flesh, as our bodies are nourished by corporeal food, as of bread and wine, which is the benefit our Catechism teaches, "whereof we are partakers in this sacrament." And if God has ordained outward things as means whereby we receive spiritual benefits, then ought they with reverence to be attended, and not as the Quakers do, lay them quite aside, nay to vilify and spurn at them; God will not suffer his own institutions to be despised.

The first sin was the breach of an outward institution in eating the forbidden fruit. God commanded the man to be stoned who brake the sabbath; and sought to kill Moses for neglecting to circumcise his son: he struck Uzzah dead upon the spot for putting his hand to the ark out of his own order; and smote Uzziah with leprosy for invading the priest's office: fire came out from the Lord, and consumed two hundred and fifty Levites, who mutinied against Aaron the high priest; and he created a new thing, and caused the earth to open her mouth and swallow Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their wives, children, and all that appertained to them, alive into the pit, for their rebellion against Moses: he slew fifty thousand and seventy Bethshemites for looking into the ark, the outward ark, made of wood, of little value in itself; but God will have his outward institutions to be regarded, because they are his, and by this we shew our reverence to him who commanded them.

And yet they are but the letter or outward body of religion, the inward and spiritual part to which they refer is the soul of religion; and as the separation of these in the natural man is death, so when the spirit and soul of religion is departed, it is quite dead, and the letter or body of it is without life, and a loathsome carcass of religion in the sight of God: therefore we must preserve the outward for the sake of the inward; if we separate them, it is death.

Yet this hinders not giving the preference by much to the inward, to the soul above the body, to the spirit above the letter. And we need not be afraid that this will cool or lessen our devotion at

the sacrament. No, on the contrary, it will raise and exalt it; for the more spiritually we understand this ordinance, we shall know it more truly, and approach it with greater reverence and attention; not feeding on the shell instead of the kernel, yet preserving the shell with care, as knowing that without the shell the kernel would not grow.

While we are in the body, the religion fitted for our use is to consist of an outward and inward part, for it is our *reasonable service* to *present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God*, Rom. xii. 1; but the reason is only in the soul, which may present the body, by which it becomes acceptable to God; but the body cannot present the soul, which is not at its command; for it profiteth nothing of itself, nor otherwise than as it is acted by the soul. Thus it is said of Christ, Heb. ix. 14, *who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God*. The merit was in the Spirit, without which the flesh had profited nothing, even the same Spirit which conceived him in the womb, and wrought miracles by him, and raised him again from the dead, and ever liveth in him to make intercession for us.

This faith is the food of souls, and nourisheth us unto eternal life; and in allusion to this, Christ calls himself the *true bread* and *manna*, and says, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*. Which he after explains to be all spiritually meant, John vi. 63; but some, taking it literally, have brought in communicating infants, and even the dead, and all the monstrous and unworthy cases in the rubric of the mass; *de Defectibus in Celebratione Missarum occurrenti-*

bus, where *de Defectu Vini*, it is said, that not to mix water with it is indeed a fault, but yet hinders not the consecration, and that notwithstanding there be no water with the wine, *conficitur sacramentum*, it is a true sacrament.

Now if I am not misinformed, (I hope I am,) the new separation will not allow even of this, but make the water so absolutely and essentially necessary, that without it there is no sacrament at all, and so we have had none ever since the reformation. If this be so, they are greater enemies to the church of England, and at greater distance from it, than Rome itself, and have need to be reformed back again to popery! before they can pretend to be of the church of England, or any part of the reformation, or of any Christian church, till they can shew one which dissolves the sacrament for want of water; or would admit them as members upon these principles, as well as assuming an authority to mend and reform their liturgies, (any two or three bishops or priests who please.) Is there any church in the world, or any private club of men, who would admit such turbulent members, as pretend a right to overturn all discipline, rule, or order, however settled, or for how long time soever continued! My heart is grieved while I write this, but I hope your next will revive me, and let me know that I have been happily deceived in all these facts which have been told me.

And that none will be found among you who will not submit to the apostle's rule, *μὴ φρονεῖν, not to be wise above that which is written*, 1 Cor. iv. 6; and he gives the cause for it, their being *puffed up one against another*; for pride is the foundation of all

heresies. Therefore, *I say*, adds St. Paul, *to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think ; but to think soberly*, Rom. xii. 3. This humility and sobriety of thinking would call to our mind, in the present dispute, that which is written, *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar*, Prov. xxx. 6.

Who then are they that have added water to the wine, and made that essential to salvation, of which Christ spoke not one word, and all the scriptures are silent? Silent in essentials! and where that silence is a prohibition, it being the frequent style of God in scripture, *which I commanded not*, being equivalent to *which I forbid*. This was the strange fire which Nadab and Abihu offered, for which *there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them*, Lev. x. 1, 2. And why was it strange fire? because God had not commanded it. And why may we not worship the host of heaven? Because, says God, it is that *which I have not commanded*. And why may we not sacrifice our children? Because, says he, *it is that which I commanded not, neither came it into my heart*, Jer. vii. 31. And again, *Which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind*, chap. xix. 5. What comes into his mind he speaks in his holy scriptures, that is, as much of his mind as he is pleased we should know, and be obliged to follow. But in what they are silent, and keep secret from us, we are not to inquire after; it belongs not to us; as it is said, *the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed* (in the scriptures) *belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may*

do all the words of this law, Deut. xxix. 29. Here was their whole duty, and they were not to *add to it or diminish from it*, chap. iv. 2, which shews the rule to be complete and perfect.

Now if it had come into the mind of Christ to have water mixed with the wine in the sacrament, especially if he had thought it essentially necessary to salvation, there can be no doubt but he would have spoke of it; whereas now it is a thing which he has not commanded, and therefore, in the language of scripture, has forbidden. At least if we be in an error for this, it is certain we err on the safer side, while we precisely follow what he has commanded; and they are in the greater danger who have made a new rule of faith to themselves, and come under the censure of those who follow that which he has not commanded.

These make more things necessary to salvation than God has made, which has been the great disturbance of the church in all ages, while fanciful men, who are fond of their own imaginations, or of others before them, and proud of their discoveries, are not afraid, rather than they should fail, to mend and reform, not only our liturgy, but the scripture itself, and deny it to be a certain rule to us.

And may it not be a consideration to the separatist, to think what it is for which they divide from their brethren, and run into the certain sin of schism; for what end of religion is served by mixing water with the wine? Does it make us more wise or holy? What one benefit is it, either for soul or body, of which we are made partakers thereby, by taking wine with water?

How has Christ's *unum necessarium*, the *one thing*

needful, been multiplied by the inventions of men into vast numbers of things, not only made needful, but necessary ! whence we become *careful and troubled about many things*, Luke x. 42. And he who can find out more necessities thinks himself an able minister of the new testament, but it is of the letter that killeth, even without the letter ! which is properly superstition, making things necessary which God made not so, nor spake, nor came into his mind. And whether is it easier to suppose that Christ neglected, or forgot, or on purpose concealed what was necessary and essential to our salvation ; or that Justin or Cyprian, or who else you please, might mistake, or their works be corrupted by those who profess the trade, and had them so many years in their hands, with full leisure, and power, and inclination to do it ? Produce any book of any father which can shew those eight evidences for its being true and genuine, which are given in Christianity Demonstrated for the holy Bible. And till this be done, bring no more fathers or ancient usages to corrupt the scriptures by adding to them.

And though the name of the whole catholic church is often given by particular churches for customs and usages of their own and neighbouring churches, yet we must consider that this is next to impossible to know, especially in the early ages, when navigation and commerce were not so extended as now, that we may reasonably suppose there were then several Christian churches which never had heard of one another ; how then could these fathers know the particular customs and usages of all these churches, unless angels were the couriers, or a new revelation given ? And now even,

when we are much better acquainted with foreign churches than the ancients were or could be, how imperfect are our accounts, travellers differing in them. We hear of Christian churches at this day where the usage of circumcision prevails, even of women too, which no doubt they think necessary, else they would not do it, and they have their own tradition for it, and old books to support it. Which the separation (as I am told) are now come to make equal to the written word of God. And the only part of their tradition, as to the fruit of the vine meaning wine mixed with water, and the fruit of the tree meaning pure wine, is taken from the Talmud, the most lying, senseless, and blasphemous book ever written, as Mr. Collier gives account in his Dictionary: it was wrote by the Jews about the middle of the fifth century after Christ, who were his most spiteful enemies, and would not fail to do every thing they could to confound and distract the Christians; even by imposing upon them as to their own usages and phraseologies; as Abendana the Jew bit several of the sages in Oxford, which they found out afterwards.

But suppose these had been in good earnest Jewish traditions, and of long standing, even before Christ came, he has condemned them all as a false foundation of faith or doctrine, and a *worshipping God in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men—full well ye reject the commandments of God, that ye may keep your own tradition*, Mark vii. 8, 9, 13. And this operates as strongly against Christian as Jewish tradition: and to get rid of this unexceptionable authority against it, the papists go to their Dictionaries, and finding that *trado* signifies

to *give* or *deliver*, they make every thing a tradition that is delivered by word or by writing, or any other way; like the apothecary, who mistook a wheelbarrow for the vehicle in which he was ordered to give his physic.

But every body knows that tradition, in the present dispute, respects the time as well as the conveyance; for the Jews derived their oral traditions from Moses, as the church of Rome from Christ or the apostles; to be deposited with the priests or elders, and conveyed down by word of mouth: therefore these are called *the traditions of the elders*, against which our Saviour inveighed so severely, and St. Peter tells them of their *vain conversation, received by tradition from their fathers*, 1 Pet. i. 18. And St. Paul describes the Jews' religion to consist chiefly in being *exceedingly zealous of the traditions of their fathers*, Gal. i. 14. These are not the traditions or ordinances which he had delivered to them, whether by word or writing, 1 Cor. xi. 2, and 2 Thess. ii. 15; because these had cast no descent, nor had they received them from their fathers, and nothing else is called tradition in our present dispute, nothing but what is old and come down to us for many generations; nothing is called tradition in this sense at its beginning, or during the life of him who first set it up: if we hear a man preach a new doctrine, we call it his *doctrine*, but not his *traditions*; and if we should call it *tradition*, (according to the etymology of the word,) because it was *delivered* in such a sermon or discourse, and apply this as a proof of the ancient traditions received from our fathers of a long time before we were born, it would be so senseless a pre-

varication, and childish playing with words, as could deceive no man of common sense ; and therefore we may be sure that the apostle, when he spoke of the traditions he himself delivered, he did not mean those old traditions of the fathers about which only is our dispute.

And yet this is all the countenance from scripture which Rome or her disciples of the new separation have to plead for their tradition; and for this reason they have, both of them, rejected the scriptures from being a rule.

But the separation has far exceeded ; for neither the church of the Jews, nor that of Rome at this day, stretch their traditions further than as comments or interpretations of scripture, and therefore must have a foundation in scripture : thus the traditions of Corban was brought as an interpretation of the Fifth Commandment, though it made it of *none effect*, Mark vii. 11—13. And many such like things they did, as the church of Rome after them. But yet she had the modesty not to impose her traditional adding water to the wine as a thing necessary, but has declared the sacrament to be valid without it : whereas the separation has advanced further, and made it necessary and absolutely so, and the want of it to null the sacrament : thinking by this rigour to frighten at least women and children into their party, as the Romans do by threatening damnation to all others ! which shews only their own utter want of charity, which is greater than faith itself, (1 Cor. xiii. 13.) And without which there can be no true faith, and consequently no true church ; and the separation has gone further in this than Rome itself, by making

other things necessary to salvation which Rome has not done, and given tradition a larger scope. So that in every thing wherein the church of Rome has rendered herself most odious, this new separation has made themselves more so.

Bellarmino struggles hard for the traditions of the Jews, which our Saviour reprehended, and says in answer, (*de Verbo Dei non scripto*, lib. vi. c. 10.) That Christ did not reprehend the traditions of Moses, and that Christ did not say they were the traditions of Moses. No, he knew they were not, but the church of the Jews called them so, and as such delivered them to the people; and he says, “*Hic damnantur traditiones*—Here those traditions are condemned, which the Jews boasted to have received from Moses and the prophets.” But he supposes those traditions which our Saviour condemned, to be those only which were made by some of their rabbies, *paulo ante ortum Salvatoris*, a little while before the coming of Christ, and *initium habuisse*, to have had no earlier a beginning: but of this he offers no sort of proof; and if these traditions had begun but a little time before our Saviour, it is more than probable their beginning might have been remembered, and then they would not have been called the traditions of the elders, received from their fathers, nor would they have boasted that they came from Moses and the prophets; or will any grant that such new-coined traditions could be put upon the people as received from the very beginning of their religion? If this can be supposed, it will render all tradition uncertain, and we know not when it deceives us. Bellarmine was forced to this vain supposition to save the infallibility of the

church, then only with the Jews; or, if he could not quite save it, yet to make her fallibility continue as short a time as he could; not considering that the pretence to infallibility failing but one day, falls for good and all: and his own supposition, altogether groundless, makes the error to have continued so long as to gain the name of tradition, and its beginning to be forgot. But our Saviour makes it plain past answering, when reprehending these traditions, Matt. xv. 7, he quotes Isaiah for them, who was more than *paulo ante*, a little while before our Saviour; and Isaiah, in the place quoted, chap. xxix. 13, speaks of these traditions as of long standing before him, and calls them *precepts of men*, which therefore could not be the ground of our faith, nor ought to be taught as doctrines of God; for thus our Saviour applies it.

Bellarmino (ibid. cap. xi.) sets down an objection against their beloved topic, of making the preaching of Christ and the apostles to be tradition in their own time; it is from Irenæus, (lib. iii. c. 1,) where he says, "*Non enim per alios*,"—That we have "not known the economy of our salvation from any others than those by whom the gospel is come to us. And that what they (the apostles) then preached, they afterwards, by the will of God, gave to us in writing, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith:" to which says Bellarmine, "*Cum Irenæus ait*—When Irenæus says, that the apostles wrote what they preached in the world, is true, but not against traditions, because they did not preach to the people all things, but only those things which were necessary or useful to them; (*quæ illis necessaria vel utilia erant*;) but

“ other things they delivered apart to those that “ were more perfect :” about which we are not concerned, while all things necessary or useful to us are contained in the scripture, without recourse to traditions. “ *Illa omnia*,” as St. Augustine says, “ All “ those things which relate to faith or manners ;” “ that is,” says Bellarmine, *ibid.* “ those things “ which are necessary to all, such as are contained “ in the Apostles’ Creed, and the Decalogue.” To which small compass all necessities are reduced by Bellarmine. I suppose he meant things absolutely so, that without them we cannot be saved. Which the sacraments themselves are not, as our Catechism cautiously words it, that they are “ generally “ necessary,” but not so that if any man were in such circumstances that he could not possibly have them, suppose for his whole life, his soul should be lost for what was not in his power to help. God forbid ! the outward institution itself is but a figure of the true, which is the Spirit, that only giveth life.

Therefore it is declared in the rubric of the Communion of the Sick, that “ if through any just impediment the sick do not receive the sacrament of “ Christ’s body and blood, the curate shall instruct “ him, that if he do truly repent him of his sins, “ and steadfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered upon the cross for him, and shed his blood “ for his redemption, earnestly remembering the “ benefits he hath thereby, he doth eat and drink “ the body and blood of our Saviour Christ profitably “ to his soul’s health, although he do not receive the “ sacrament with his mouth.” But this I hear is expunged in the Communion Office printed by the

separation; it was too spiritual for them, and led men's thoughts too much to the true intent and meaning of the institution, and which only makes it acceptable to God, and without which it is dung and abomination in his sight, a dead carcass of religion.

And yet these ministers of the letter will not stick to the letter, but add to it from some old traditions; and make these necessary, absolutely necessary, to our salvation! And where Christ speaks of spiritual eating or nourishment, John vi. 53, and tells us so, ver. 63; yet some will take it according to the letter, and thence infer that this is necessary to infants, who cannot eat bread, and even as nourishment to the dead. Which practice was forbid, and therefore continued, within a very few years of the beginning of the fourth century; for then the third council of Carthage sat, and they would not forbid a practice, if there had been no such practice. And I observe that the council discharged this practice without any regard to the long tradition upon which it stood, but purely upon the reason of the thing; for this is the reason given, can. 6. "*Dictum est enim*—For the Lord said, *Take and eat*; but a "dead carcass can neither take nor eat." I think the reason very good, and sufficient to abolish that or any other tradition: but now neither sense nor reason, nor the very letter of the scripture itself, can hold its ground against tradition, but we may add to it, or take from it, to make it square neatly with our tradition!

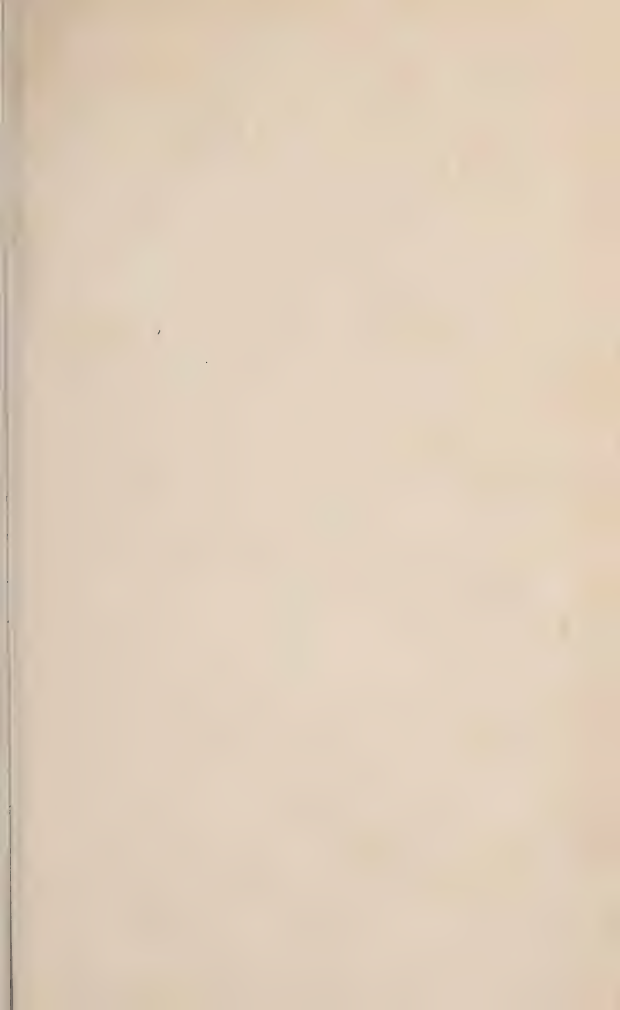
I am told (pray let me know the truth of it) that the new separation have shewed a disposition to revive the old tradition of communicating infants in

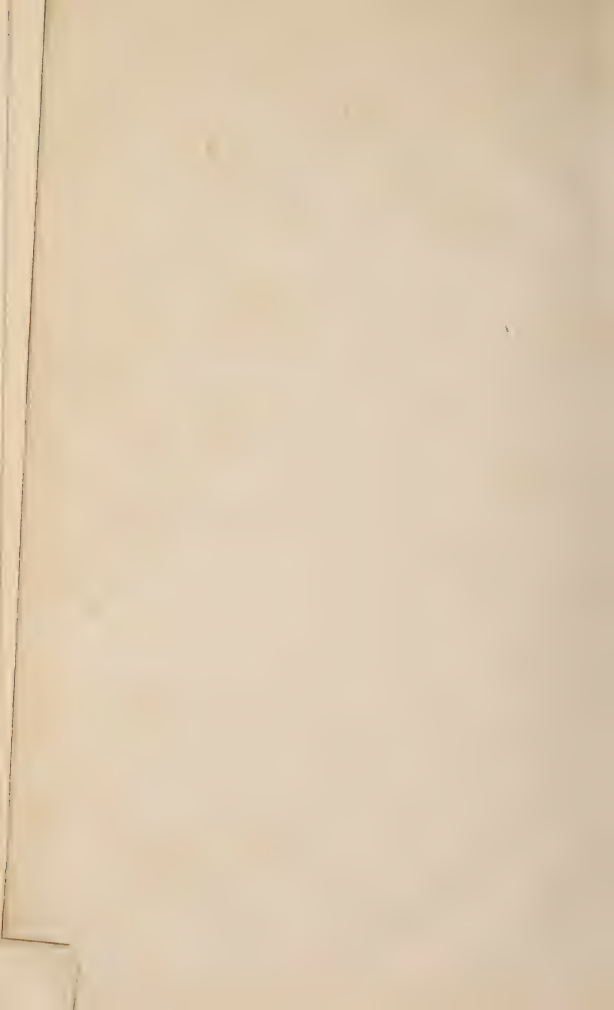
the eucharist; and then they can easily make it necessary! and send us new cargoes from time to time, which we have warning to expect, and we shall never have done, for tradition is a bottomless well. And if tradition without scripture can make necessities, it will make our way to heaven very difficult as to the number of necessities, and very doubtful about the choice of traditions; for some churches have left off what others retain, and, as the church of Rome herself confesses, it is not three or four fathers, but the concurrent testimony of all the fathers, can be called the tradition of the church.

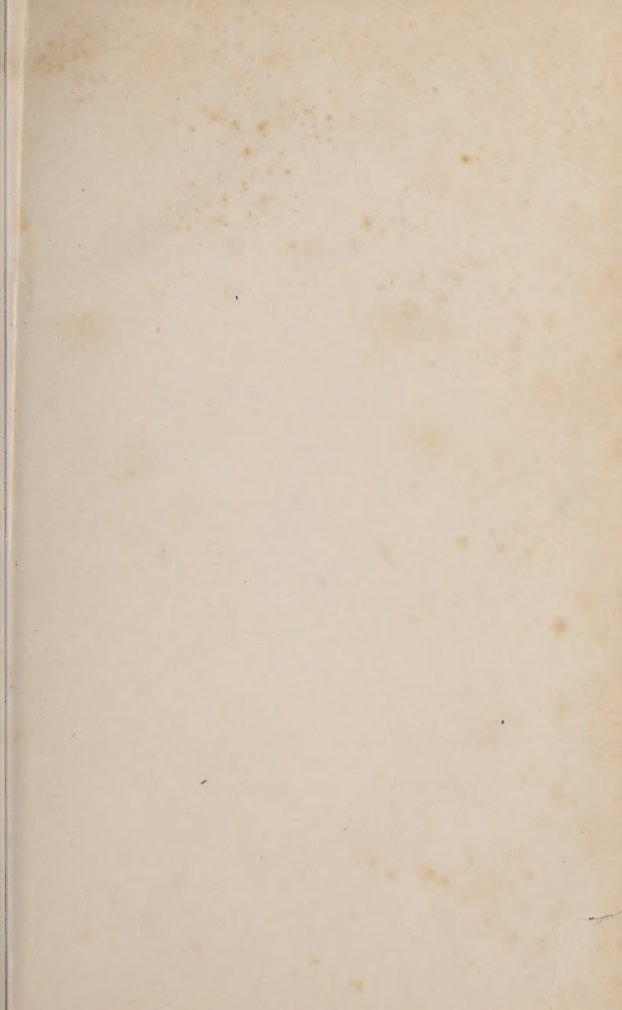
The necessary and acceptable worship is in spirit and in truth; the flesh, that is, the letter, profiteth nothing, but our jangling is not only about the letter, but the circumstances, the fringes, of that letter, the *κράμα*, or mixture of wine and water, which is of little moment, and not mentioned at all in scripture, yet now is made necessary and indispensable! Thus the Galatians turned from the spirit to the letter; they would have the outward circumcision revived, which St. Paul told them availed nothing one way or other, whether they had it or had it not; for it was but the letter, and a figure or representation only of that which was only necessary: *and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God*, Gal. vi. 15, 16. *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?* the reality, the *one thing needful*; but are careful and troubled about many things which are not needful, the shadows and figures of the *unum necessarium*, which is faith in Christ, and that is wholly spiritual, and

all within, though it be expressed in outward representations in the flesh : but *having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain*, Gal. iii. 1. 3, 4.

END OF VOL. I.







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